

# ZIGZAG

A man with a full beard and a grey beanie is playing a banjo. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a dark scarf. The background consists of bare, dark tree branches against a light sky. The overall tone is artistic and folk-oriented.

**MIKE NESMITH**

**The Road To Rio**

**CLOVER**

**Lucky At Last**

**ROY HARPER**

**Quiet Revolution**

**SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY**

**Under The  
Boardwalk**

NO. 72 MAY 1977 PRICE 30P \$1.50  
**RICHARD THOMPSON**  
**COVER FEATURE**



# POCO

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FOR STRINGS  
HAY

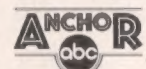
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MUSICAL WILL APPEAL TO PEOPLE BEYOND ALL QUESTION.

Zig Zag 72 May 1977

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RELY ON YOUR EARS!



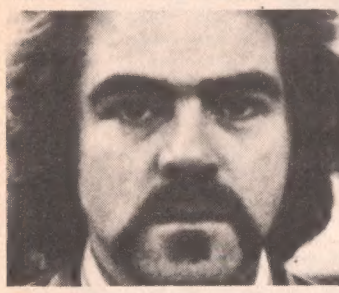
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POCO'S NEW ALBUM 'INDIAN SUMMER'



**Sufi So Good 26**  
All you ever wanted to know about Richard Thompson (but didn't know who to ask).



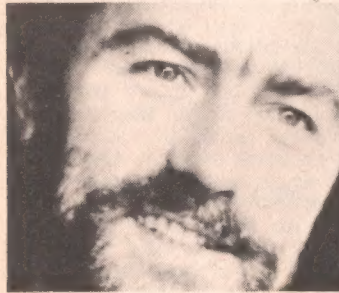
**Unavailable No Longer 12**  
As Clover return to the hills of Marin County, the *Zigzag* Lost and Found Department reports on their renaissance.



**Under The Boardwalk 20**  
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Further Away  
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Zigzag's appearance in the past has been as irregular as Andy Childs' forays beyond the confines of his local. Thanks to hours of slave labour and relentless bullying by our publisher, however, we now manage to keep to schedules, so all copy and advertisements, both small and large, should be sent in as closely as possible to the 20th day of each preceding month (if not earlier).

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chell's various aggregations, and they did four songs, the highlight for me being one which I think was called 'Footprints Of Jesus', where the lead was taken by a lady with one astonishing voice. The song was not unreminiscent of 'Sixteen Candles' by The Crests, and very good.

Then Pat Boone introduced his daughter Debbie, who sang a rather unremarkable song called 'Father God'. Perhaps the impact was lessened by the fact that she looked no younger than her father. While we're on the subject, Bob Fisher, the gentleman publicist at Motown, gave me a new album by Pat Boone on the Motown Hitsville country label. It's a secular record, as can be easily discerned by the lecherous wink Patrick is giving on the rear of the sleeve, and it's called 'Texas Woman - The Country Side Of Pat Boone'. I can't tell you it's essential, but the Boone tubes seem well preserved, and there's lickety split steel playing from J.D. Maness, and a song that probably by Mike Settle.

Next were Andrae Crouch and The Disciples. Due to the fact that to my everlasting regret I missed Delaney & Bonnie at the RAH in 1970, this was the most exciting gospel group I've ever seen. In the States Andrae apparently has six albums permanently in the gospel charts, and the latest one, released

here on DJM titled 'This Is Another Day', has crossed over very strongly to the soul charts. Not surprising, really,



as it has about a thousand times more soul than anything released on the Philly label since Bunny Sigler's 'Love Train', and that was over two years ago.

Andrae himself does vocals and keyboards, assisted vocally by Sandra Crouch (his sister?) and ladies called Daniebell and Billi Thedford, and there's a medium sized group behind them with the normal rock accoutrements. Andrae's vocals are closest perhaps to Solomon Burke's, while the whole sound is a swirling, exciting, tam-bourine shaking rave-up. I've only got a couple of his LPs so I couldn't tell you too many of the titles, but 'Just Like He Said He Would' from the Word LP 'Take Me Back' was a killer.

It was actually so good that I forgot to take notes. After Cliff White's five star review of the band playing at Hammer-smith Odeon, I'd been waiting for the opportunity to check this gospel business out. Needless to say, it was better than I expected, with no self-consciousness at all on the part of the performers. That's what gets embarrassing...if the artist isn't absolutely confident and upfront about what he has to say. And while some of you cynical nuds out there are thinking that I've gone round the twist watching this quaint holy roller stuff, just take the trouble to check it out yourself. They all said Gram Parsons was mad.

JOHN TOBLER

## STILL A CLASSIC

## Rack Sacking

One of the things that your letters often suggest (that wouldn't involve severe physical distress for the members of our staff) is an occasional survey of cheap/interesting deletions currently available.

Obviously the length of time that albums are available for, and the extent of their availability vary considerably. For example, I heard that Virgin in New Oxford Street had copies of the Beau Brummels' 'Bradley's Barn' for £1.99 a couple of weeks ago, but when I went there the very next day they'd all gone. On the other hand, goodies like 'Hot Wacks' and 'Shredder' by The Wackers have been fairly easily obtainable at around £1.59 for some time. Most of my shopping is done round London, and the stuff I've picked up in recent months includes 'The Bob Seger System' and 'Mongrel' both at £2.59, 'Roots And Branches' by the Dillards at £1.59, various oldies by National Lampoon and The Firesign Theatre for between £1.50 and £2.50, 'Fever Tree' and 'Fever Tree For Sale' at £1.25, both H.P. Lovecraft albums for £1.99, and the soundtrack of 'Revolution', with otherwise unreleased stuff from Steve Miller and Quicksilver, at £1.25.

There also seems to be plenty of stuff by The Byrds, The Turtles, Nesmith, Family and other people as diverse as The Small Faces, Simon Stokes, Morning and Steelwind. On top of this there always seems to be a steady flow of more recent album cut-outs from the States, so you can often pick up British stuff like SAHB, Richard & Linda Thompson, Black Sabbath or whatever takes your fancy, at a very reasonable price.

Another good source of rare and unusual grist is the mail

order firms, who advertise in the various small ads columns. One of the best and most reliable is Hot Wacks, run by the redoubtable Bert Muirhead and his partner-in-crime Willie, who operate from Greyfriars Market, 14 Forrest Road, Edinburgh EH1 2QN.

Their recent lists include golden goodies like 'Spirit In The Sky' at 99p, the first Cody album at £1.60, 'Sunfighter' at £1.30, 'The Youngbloods' 'Rock Festival' (which apparently sold a mere 50 copies when it was released over here) for 99p, and the Henske/Yester albums 'Farewell Aldebaran' and 'Rosebud' for £1.40. There is loads more equally good stuff too, so I'd strongly recommend the investment of an SAE to get hold of those lists.

Having said that, though, the only real path to success for the searcher after great bargains and unobtainable grist is to look long, hard and wide, even in the most unlikely places. My most prized capture of the year was found in my local Smith's, a copy of John Phillips' 'The Wolf King Of L.A.' for 99p! I almost got ejected from the store when I started capering round the racks, uttering strange cries of joy!

PAUL KENDALL

## THE ZIGZAG LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

## Not 'Half' Bad

One of the very few advantages of being an alcoholic recluse around these parts is that when one unwittingly ventures forth in desperation to one of the many, shall we say less salubrious hostelrys in the area, one is invariably obliged to sit quietly in some dingy corner, devoid of stimulating conversation and aesthetically pleasing surroundings...whereupon one's only remaining solace is the pleasure to be gained from a good book.

Two of the more interesting books I've come to grips with have been Dory Previn's autobiography, 'MIDNIGHT BABY' (Elm Tree Books, £3.95 hard back) and 'MYSTERY TRAIN' by Greil Marcus (Omnibus Press, £1.95 paperback).

If you've ever listened to any of Dory Previn's albums, you will doubtless know that she isn't exactly your average lady singer/songwriter, in fact some people would go so far as to say she is unique. Maybe. What is certain, though, is that she lived through an exceedingly buggered-up childhood, and has written about it most convincingly, in a vivid if slightly unconventional style.

In her preface to 'Midnight

Baby' (which is likely to be the first part of an on-going autobiography - this part only deals with her childhood), she begins by saying "I don't think I wrote this book. I think I wrote it down. For someone else. Someone I used to be". Intriguing, eh?

Well; in the meat of the book she goes on to tell how her father was gassed in the First World War and subject to violent rages; was convinced he was sterile, and therefore very suspicious of Dory's origins; how he grew to adore her when her talent as a precocious entertainer began to emerge; and how - when a second child was born - he lost his marbles completely, and locked mum and the two kids in a boarded-up room for three months.

It's all written as a child with a remarkably advanced intellect and an incomplete grasp of English grammar would probably write it...sort of thought flow, if you can call it that. Anyway, it's a thoroughly engrossing book, parts of which I found genuinely moving; and the whole idea of prefacing it by saying that it was written for someone she used to be completely negates any possible criticisms of self pity, or pretentious introspection.

To put things in perspective, however, I must admit that at £3.95 I can only recommend it to those who hold Ms. Previn in particularly high esteem, and who require an exposition of some of the more cryptic songs from her earlier albums. The rest of you are advised to wait until it appears in paperback.

"Probably the best book ever written about Rock" states the cover of 'Mystery Train' by Greil Marcus, and if it's not quite that ('Outlaw Blues' by Paul Williams gets my vote), then it's certainly not far off. Marcus, whose credentials are pretty well impeccable (Associate Editor of *Rolling Stone*, and contributor to *Creem*, *Newsday*, *The New York Times* and *Village Voice*), has chosen to explain how American rock music, or the best of it, is intrinsically and irrevocably wound up with American culture in general, and that it is somehow unnatural to listen to it, view it, dissect it or do whatever else you want to do to it, in isolation.

Marcus states rather grandiosely that he is no more capable of mulling over Elvis without thinking of Herman Melville than he is of reading Jonathan Edwards without putting on Robert Johnson's records as background music, and if that isn't exactly stating the obvious, then by the same token it's not the book's most provocative statement...just an appropriate indication of the author's approach to his subject.

In linking rock music to the rest of American heritage and culture, Marcus has examined

the personalities and music of Harmonica Frank, Robert Johnson, The Band, Sly Stone, Randy Newman and Elvis Presley with all the analytical sensibilities of an experienced critic, perceiving approximately fifty times more than the average listener. His essays on The Band, Sly Stone and Randy Newman in particular, are the best I've ever read on those artists, and they made me want to go away and play all their records again. My appreciation of Sly Stone's 'Riot' and Newman's 'Sail Away' have been enhanced considerably as a result.

Much of what Marcus has to say on more specific areas of American culture could prove to be more enlightening if you happened to live over there, but nevertheless, he puts his ideas across most clearly and comprehensively, and with a quality of writing that one has come to expect when his name is on it.

'Mystery Train', even at £1.95, is good solid material, and highly recommended. It's not (and doesn't purport to be) a history of rock, or the history of rock in American culture, or anything like that. It is simply one person's ingenious and eminently sensible views on a subject he obviously loves dearly. And anybody who writes a song called 'I Can't Get No Nookie' (on the 'Masked Marauders' album) has just got to be worth paying attention to.

Finally, to wind up this month's dose of literature, a mention of a book that was recommended some years ago in this mag, and has just been republished. It's Nigel Trevina's excellent book, 'LOU REED AND THE VELVETS' (Bantam, available by mail from Minnie Place, Falmouth, Cornwall, price 70p plus 12p p&p). Tirelessly and expertly researched, well written and beautifully laid-out, this is still the best work I've seen on the Velvets. Besides a detailed history of the band, it includes all the words to 'The Gift' and plenty of good photos and amusing illustrations.

It only covers Reed's solo career as far as 'Transformer', but as everyone knows that everything he's done after that, except 'Metal Machine Music', is worthless garbage, it doesn't really matter. It just so happens that the other day I was listening to that embarrassing and pathetic Clash single (which punks everywhere have been telling me is "extremely potent" and "raging with raw vibrant energy"), and comparing it with 'I Heard Her Call My Name' from the second Velvets album. Absolutely no contest...the original Velvet Underground were, are, and probably always will be, the most anarchic rock'n'roll band ever to plug in.

Read all about it (no pun intended).

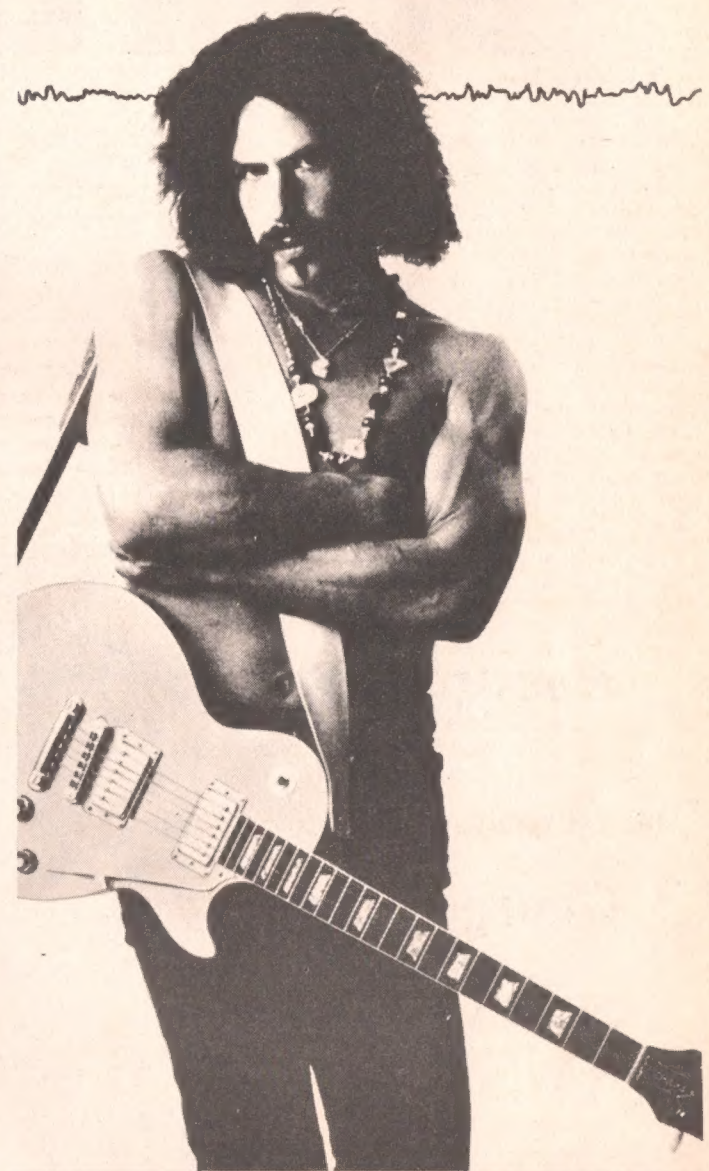
ANDY CHILDS

Even if you think you know where Spirit have been where they're going is even better.

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As the pound plummets, the economy slumps and the government totters, there is yet hope for the fair isle of Albion as we get a taste of pride and patriotism the Roy Harper way.

# THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND

During the last couple of months, when Roy Harper's extremely unfortunate and debilitating illness has forced him into the spotlight more often than even he would probably wish for, it appears that a lot of people have forgotten about his excellent new album, 'Bullinamivase' (Harvest SHSP 4060).

In my humble opinion, as something of a Harper fan, I reckon that it's his best album yet, eclipsing even the magnificent 'HQ'. The album's *tour de force* is the beautifully constructed and totally captivating 'One Of Those Days In England (Parts 2-10)', which takes up the whole of side two and is quite the most impressive song about our national heritage (at least, I think that's what it's about) that I've heard for as long as I can remember.

Roy Harper has always written and sung about subjects that few other people seem able to approach with the same skill or sensitivity, and for this reason alone - even if he didn't make great rock music - Harper is undoubtedly one of the very few really important songwriters in this country.

A couple of days after walking right past Death's door, Harper was relaxing in a London hotel and, unbelievably, doing interviews. Now I know that, more than most people, Harper is somewhat pissed off at the way the press have treated him, so to be honest I was slightly nervous of the outcome of our meeting. I knew it would either be a really fascinating interview, or else I would bungle it completely and make an arsehole of myself.

As it happened, he was fascinating. He chose his words with great deliberation and came across as one of the most genuine and charming guys I've ever had the privilege to talk to. It was obvious that he still hadn't completely recovered from his illness, and in fact the interview had to be curtailed prematurely when tiredness overcame him and he flaked out on the hotel bed.

What we did get down on tape, however, was really interesting, I think, and I'm typing it out here almost in full. By the very nature of the way he constructed his an-

swers, Harper effectively edited it all for me.

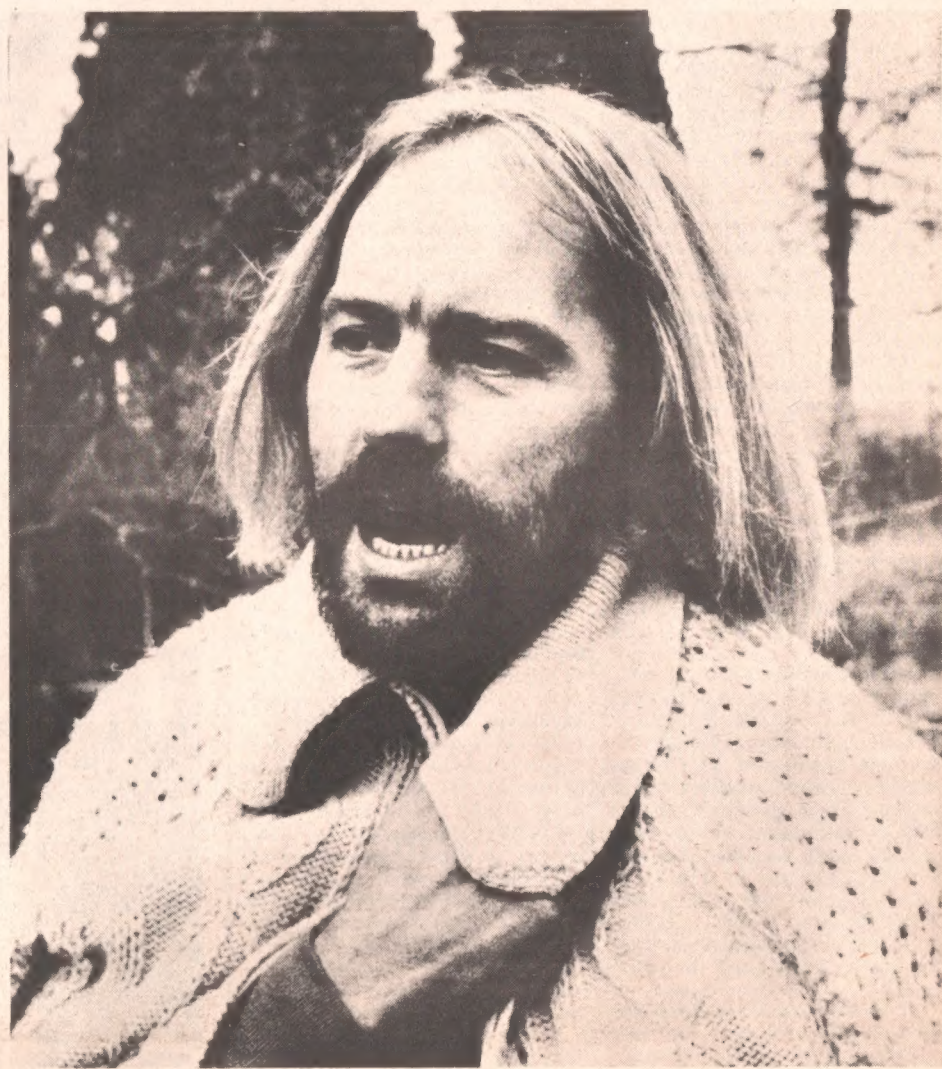
*It occurred to me that there might be a Roy Harper the songwriter and musician, and Roy Harper the professional interviewee...*

Yes, that's right. That's exactly what goes on. It's only in the fringe magazines, like *Zigzag* for instance, that anyone ever asks me questions other than "What happened when you blew the shit-house wall out with a stick of dynamite?" It's the only chance you get to talk about the

other things, because whatever you say to the music rags, whatever information you give them, they edit all the sensationalist junk out of it, and throw the rest away.

*I remember you once saying that interviews are valuable because you had more to say than you could actually say in your songs...there were more things to talk about...*

You can't really get everything into your songs, but then again you wouldn't want to, because a song is a song, a poem is a poem, and to try



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## THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND

and articulate meaning into it detracts from its value as a poem. So really what you're asking there, or what is being deciphered there, is that there are things to say other than what goes into poems...in the way that it goes into poems or songs or whatever you want to call them.

There is stuff that you cannot say in a poem, and there is stuff - by the same virtue - that you can only say in a poem. Words are a much more difficult medium to work with once you scratch the surface into trying to understand what the human being is doing when he's using words... when he opens his mouth and makes a sound on some vocal chords that have spent millions of years in their development from basic grunts to what we have now. If you scratch the surface in trying to understand what's happening in that process, and you've got below the surface, you realise that there's a lot more to the use of words than you ever dreamt there was...and you start to pick them very carefully.

I sometimes spend weeks and weeks trying to decide whether it should be 'and' that I use at the beginning of a certain line, or 'but'. Also whether 'and' or 'but' should be used at all. My words on this new record of poems and whatnot are perhaps not as chosen as the words on records in the past. On this record I've left them more to their own devices, which is what I suspect everybody else does. I suspect that not many people have the same neurosis about words that I do, and I don't think for one moment that the general public will ever want to go into words in the same depth that someone like me does. I say "will ever want", because in the future there might be some incredible machines capable of deciphering the past, namely our present, in a much more precise context than ever we were able to whilst we lived in it. And for sure the devices that will be investigated in such a futuristic view will undoubtedly be the things that we wrote, and the things we said, etc.

*Listening to 'HQ', and especially 'When An Old Cricketer Leaves The Crease', it doesn't appear to be saying anything as 'revolutionary' as some of your earlier stuff, but it was saying something that nobody else seemed to be saying, i.e. that England, the real England, is being worn away.*

It's the values. It's the difference in values between now and then. There's a lot of that sort of stuff on the new album. I just think that there's been a tremendous Celtic revival at the expense of all things English, whereas at one time the Celts, wherever they were from, (I don't need to name the various Celtic

fringes that are around), basked in a great amount of English glory... some of which they created themselves.

But now that the English sun has set, or seems to have done, so to speak, there's a Celtic revival which tends a lot of the time to try and kick England in the guts. Not consciously, I think, and certainly not as a wide consensus, it's just that England has been eroded somewhat by all kinds of forces - not the least of which is the economic state of the world - and the Celtic fringe has decided to add its own weight to that erosion, whereas it could have done the opposite...but people never do that. People always jump on whichever bandwagon is going, rather than decide for themselves what the forces are around and that it would be of much more help to themselves if they helped Big Brother, because then Big Brother could perhaps get off his hospital bed and help them again.

Humans on a personal level are very much more efficient I think than humans on a large community level. On a large community level you lose all kinds of personal contact, and life necessarily becomes less meaningful and more meaningless...whichever one of those you'd choose...I would choose "more meaningless". And so I felt it necessary in the last couple of years to try and boost the Englishness that's around...reiterate my own Anglo-Saxonness. 'Old Cricketer' is one of the fruits of that plant, in the same way that the long song on this new album is really...although it's more of a look at the world, in fact, in the middle of the song, but it starts and ends in England.

I think that it's very important to actually maintain one's identity in that way, because the forces alive in the world today are very splintering. There's a whole splintering effect that the media is having, and the bureaucracy, and the attempts at massive central government that are going on. Because if Europe ever works on the same scale that the United States or the USSR are working on now, then we at the bottom of the tree, at the grassroots, become even more impersonal. And I'm a great believer myself in de-centralization which isn't revolutionary.

Which brings me to the other point about which we were talking. I was always mistaken for being a revolutionary when I wasn't. I was perhaps the nearest thing that 1969/70 had to a revolutionary, but I don't think you get a true revolutionary among humans as such until you get absolutely stinking conditions, and we haven't had those for about forty years, and that's before I was born - a long time before I was born - and consequently I don't know too much about them. I've been angry for a long time about various issues but you can't stir up people who have a fridge, a washing machine and two cars into revolution, because they just don't want to go, and it's wrong to think that even that you



Roy Harper and Black Sheep: L to R... Dave Cochran; Dave Lawson; Andy Roberts; Henry McCullough; John Halsey

can, or would like to push them into revolution. I think revolution is the wrong word.

*You were, however, still putting ideas forward that other people were either ignoring or hadn't even thought about...*

Yeah, and I'll still do that. I'll do that for some duration of my life because basically I don't know how to do anything else, because I've always been like that. You could say that it's a reflex action on my part. I don't think that I'm cleverer than anybody else for doing that, it's just that I brought myself up in a different way than I now see that others were brought up. And so my conditioned reflexes, or whatever you want to call them, are slightly different from the normal guy who writes songs, and in fact the normal guy who walks down the street. So I'm kind of stuck with that, except that it doesn't amount to revolutionary at all. I would say that I score quite heavily on awareness, I think, and I think there's a large section of the community in any generation who are aware, but I often find that they squander that. In terms of what is going on now in the world, awareness is squandered a lot.

So you see, the reason that I can have 'When An Old Cricketer Leaves The Crease' and 'The Spirit Lives' on the same album is because I'm aware of both of them, not because

there's any conflict going on in my character. I'm sure there is, but I don't particularly want to make myself acutely aware of those, because I don't want to stop the natural forces that prey on me. I want to continue to do the things that I do.

*Can you run through the tracks on the new album for us?*

Well, the first song on the first side is just an ad generally for the album, and an ad for the song on the other side. If you come to me in a few years time I'll tell you what it's all about, but other than that you can go away, listen to it, and try to decide what you think it's about. It's fairly easy, but it's not anything I want to give away to the press. It's something I can't tell the press at the moment. It seems like an ineffectual, nice, kind little song that Radio One would be really pleased with, but if you go away and listen to it, you might get a little more out of it than the average housewife. That's what I'm saying, but I'm not going to say anymore than that.

The second song, 'These Last Days', was the last song I actually wrote, and it was the only song I wrote specifically for the album. The others are just songs that either accumulated or that I was writing last year, or whenever. When it came to making the record, I realised that it wasn't quite together, there wasn't quite the right atmosphere about all the songs, and I thought "Oh God, I've got to write another song", and I had an idea of how it should be in my head. So I went away and wrote a song. I went

up with the sheep on my farm one afternoon in that parched summer we had, with not a blade of grass to be seen hardly, sat down on a stool and wrote. And it came out as 'These Last Days'. Probably if I'd written it two months earlier, it would have been a much maturer song by the time it reached the record.

As it is, it's not as mature as it could be, but I don't think the man in the street will be able to pick too many holes in it. I can, and it just bothers me when I can. It sounds as though it's a kind of 'given in' thing, like I've given in, and someone - I think it was Allan Jones of *Melody Maker* - even said it was sort of whimpering, defeatist kind of stuff. But no way is it that. How can it be with a verse in it like: Sweet anarchy/Always so real and peaceful to be/Moment by moment for facing the world honestly.

That's a fairly strong statement, and I do actually have a lot of personal anarchy going, and so does everybody else...if you don't like something, you stand up and say "I don't like that", which is a form of anarchy.

The third song is 'Cherishing The Lonesome', which I think is a good effort from everybody in the band. It's been a difficult song to play all along, and we had to change it around quite a lot, moving the verses and choruses around until it finally worked.

Fourth song is 'Naked Flame', which is a letter I wrote to someone. It's a poem really, not a song. It was a letter to someone that just had "Love, Roy" on the end of it, and I think the fourth verse is the

best verse. I think it's one of the best pieces of poetry on the record.

And the last song is 'Watford Gap' which is just my usual wind-down... because like an elephant doesn't realise his own strength when he's stepping on a twig, does he? He isn't even aware that the twig's there, really, and in the past I think I've been very guilty of not recognising how much other people can take. Some of the records - namely 'HQ', for instance - are really very heavy, and in so far as that goes, I would say that this record is a lot mellower. I'm at a stage in my life, in my artistic development, or whatever, when I'm trying to find out how much people can take, rather than blasting out full-strength and saying "Take that!". I'm now trying genuinely to get some feedback.

We've already sold more copies of this record than we did of 'HQ', and it's been out about three weeks, whereas 'HQ' has been out about 18 months. That's the difference already. I mean, I look at it all as an interested spectator, an interested bystander, not wanting to jump on the commercial bandwagon and think "If I make more records like this, I'll have more success" and so on. Because I'm quite capable, I think, of turning round and going straight back to 'HQ' or where 'HQ' was, from this one...if I thought that was what I should do for the sake of my own integrity, or for any other reason. In fact, I think that my own favourite records are 'Life-mask', 'HQ' and the new one, and I don't know which one to put first, really.

ANDY CHILDS



Down and up in Frisco and London... the fairytale story of Clover's dramatic reemergence from the rock'n'roll dumper... the story they couldn't censor - it's shocking but true!!

# UNAVAILABLE NO LONGER



"PLAYING TOP 40 IS  
PRETTY MUCH THE DITCH-  
DIGGING JOB OF MUSIC"

I've yet to have the good fortune to go there myself, but I'm reliably informed by folks who have that Mill Valley, nestling where the aptly named Scenic River rolls across Marin County into San Francisco Bay, is a far from unpleasant place to be... beautiful mountains running down to the sea through verdant woodlands; more than its fair share of sunshine; a very high standard of living ("You can be a bum there and still have three cars"); and most of the Bay Area musicians as residents. Yes indeed, a real nice place to set up home...

Which is just as well from Clover's point of view, because they've been there for most of the last decade, and the last six years of that have been spent in virtual dry dock, waiting for the contacts and the contracts which would let them set sail again.

"They were lean and hungry years", says John McFee, their hotshot multi-instrumentalist, a trifle ruefully. "We just kept playing, and made our money mainly from doing live work

and studio session work. We did a lot of radio and TV commercials, and a couple of film soundtracks...things you would never recognise as Clover".

The films were 'Payday', a film about the seamy side of country music with Rip Torn, where Clover shared the soundtrack with Area Code 615, and another one which was shot in Israel, whose name they can't remember. Both these gigs were acquired through Ed Bogas, who might have been a rank amateur when he produced Clover's two Fantasy albums, but who soon developed into a big deal as an arranger and musical consultant in the fields of rock and film music.

Don't go getting the idea, though, that Clover were making a healthy living out of their music during those years. Despite the sessions they were getting, and despite the fact that they were working an average of four nights a week "from Seattle to San Diego" in various clubs, bars and occasional concert halls, they were invariably skint.

Mind you...they hadn't exactly helped their financial situation by expanding the line-up from four men to six after the termination of the Fantasy contract, anticipating that "if they were good enough to get one contract, they were certainly good enough to get another". Huey Louis, itinerant harp player and singer, joined in '71, and was soon followed by Sean Hopper on keyboards...whose previous job had been as the string bass player in a bluegrass band! (Trivia note for Tobler and his mates: Sean's best mate, one Phil Richardson, played banjo and fiddle in this same band, and is now with the mighty Norton Buffalo.) Anyway, Sean can tell us how tough it was:

"When you're playing the clubs, it's almost the same as being on the road...you still have the same equipment which eats money up. The truck and the gear took up almost every cent we made, and if you're playing the clubs it's hard to get very far beyond that situation, unless you're playing Top 40. We could have been making \$600 a night...Top 40 bands over there make a lot of money, and there are a lot of them doing it very expertly, but it's pretty much the ditch digging job of music, and

it just didn't appeal to us, so we never did it. So we didn't get as much money as those sort of bands, but then those kind of bands never really do anything".

**T**ime after time, Clover apparently came within an ace of signing a new contract, but a combination of the vinyl shortage, executive cold feet, Clover's permanent management problems and their own refusal to sign anything short-term, meant that nothing ever actually happened.

"Also", adds Sean, "we've always been considered an untypical sort of band in the States, not easily defined, and that's something the companies look for. They don't want to have any fears over what the marketing is, they want to know the target area...how many 13 year olds in each city are going to buy the album."

"So since we didn't fit into any pigeon hole too well, we had to find someone with a little vision to make a step, and it just didn't happen."



"...THERE WERE TIMES  
WHEN I DIDN'T HAVE  
ENOUGH MONEY TO EAT"



## Their New Album

### Nationwide Tour Dates MAY

Sat.	7th	Liverpool, Empire
Sun.	8th	Sheffield, Top Rank
Mon.	9th	Birmingham, Town Hall
Thurs.	12th	Manchester, ABC Ardwick Apollo
Fri.	13th	Newcastle, Mayfair
Sat.	14th	Redcar, Coatham Bowl
Sun.	15th	Harrogate, Royal Hall
Mon.	16th	Leeds Polytechnic
Tues.	17th	Lincoln Drill Hall

Wed.	18th	Guildford, Civic Hall
Fri.	20th	Swindon, Brunell Rooms
Sun.	22nd	LONDON, NEW VICTORIA


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'Diamonds and Rust' CBS 5222  
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'Sin After Sin' CBS 82008

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"'Sin After Sin' is an album that could stop an advancing Chieftan tank in its tracks and shake it apart into a pile of nuts 'n bolts."

It remains the most powerful British heavy rock release for years."

Geoff Barton, Sounds

on  Records & Tapes



## UNAVAILABLE NO LONGER



### "THE MUSIC BUSINESS IS JUST AS SICK AS HOLLYWOOD IN THE 30s"

People would come close, and then not enough of them would agree on it".

Alex Call then chips in with a rather horrific explanation of something they have in the States called 'demographics', where apparently a cross section of record buyers have their reactions to a variety of music scientifically monitored so that the collated results will give the marketing men an idea of who any given band or artist is going to appeal to.

He tells me that there's a book called 'Starmaking Machinery' where all this is chronicled. It basically follows the fortunes of Commander Cody & The Lost Planet Airmen over a period of months to demonstrate how the wheels of the music business turn...or rather grind.

It seems that Cody's last single, ('Don't Let Go' from the live double, if my memory serves me well) was getting extensive airplay on KHJ, one of the big LA stations, and was all set to spread to the big East Coast stations and smaller ones all over the country, thus virtually guaranteeing them a much-needed hit.

Unfortunately a new guy took over the running of KHJ at this point, and as a token demonstration of his omnipotence, he took the single off the playlist.

So...nobody else bothered to play it, sales of the single stopped, sales of the album dropped off, and when a demographic finding showed that the Airmen appealed primarily to an Over 25 male audience (not a major market), that was it...Warners don't want to know, Cody is consigned to the dumper, and shortly afterwards the band breaks up.

Clover have suffered a lot of that kind of extraneous crap during their ten years together, and not surprisingly, their attitude towards the music business is a little jaundiced.

**D**uring those years in the wilderness, the only thing that kept Clover's name before a wider public was the fact that McFee kept cropping up as a sideman on some pretty damned prestigious albums: Van Morrison's 'Tupelo Honey' and 'St. Dominic's Preview', Boz Scaggs' 'Moments', and Steve Miller's 'Fly Like An Eagle', for instance, as well as stuff like the Hoodoo Rhythm Devils' 'What The Kids Want'.

Not surprisingly, he also got asked to join some fairly impressive tour bands. Morrison, Scaggs and Gregg Allman all asked him to go on the road with them, and it's proof of his faith in Clover (or evidence of certifiable lunacy, depending on how you look at it) that John politely declined all such offers.

"There were times when I didn't have enough money to eat, and it got pretty tempting to go where I could instantly be making ten times as much money. But I always felt really strongly about Clover, plus it's also a moral issue, because I feel almost angry at the world. I know what's good and what isn't, and I've always felt that we're as good as anything that's happening. I'm not going to put anybody down, but I've always believed in us very strongly, and it disturbs me that we've got so little recognition for so long. There are a lot of people that I almost hold grudges against. There's a lot of this business of 'Hi, it's good to see you' when you're doing well...there's a lot of hypocrisy. The music business is just as sick as Hollywood in the 30s".

To keep body and soul together, the various Clovers were forced to do other work too. Huey has a natural foods distribution company; Alex had a job with his girlfriend's father's firm; and of course John spent some time gardening for Keith Knudsen. (Oh the bitter irony!...one of the finest steel players on the planet, reduced to gardening for The Doobie Brothers' second drummer!)

It's a further tribute to the band's spirit and resilience that through all the hassles, hardships and disappointments, the only split in the ranks was when Mitch Howie, who had drummed on the Fantasy albums, left about four years ago. He was succeeded by a number of percussionists - including Marcus Grossman, a well known player round the Bay Area, and Kirk Harwood, who's also with Norton Buffalo now - before Micky Shine came to stay in '75.

**T**he influence of the new members, and the band's gradual evolution meant that the Clover sound had changed radically between '70 and '76. Those of you fortunate enough to own either of the Fantasy albums - 'Clover' (Fan-

tasy 8395) and 'Fourty Niner' (8405) - will know that they basically come under the 'country rock' banner, whereas the music Clover make now is drawn from a much wider range of sources.

"When we made our first albums we were going through a stage, really", Explains John. "They were country influenced, but before those albums we'd gone through a stage where we were very R&B. Part of the sound now is certainly Huey and Sean. Sean's keyboard playing is into some pretty sophisticated things more generally associated with R&B and jazz; and Huey's vocal style is very definitely pretty black. His main love musically is blues and soul...there aren't many harp players who are totally oblivious to black music."

"The music we listen to is enormously varied, and some of it is involved in the act and some of it isn't so much, but we thought it was ridiculous just to concentrate on one little corner of it. You can strengthen the music by drawing from all those sources".

"You can be diverse to your detriment", adds Alex. "I've seen bands that play completely diametrically opposed styles of music, but we've blended them. People might understand better if we did just play one style and then another, and then they could say whether they liked it or not, but the style we've evolved...until something has a label, people aren't sure whether it's cool or not, and let's face it - people are sheep. Of course, in earlier times our material had a lot wider spread, but over the last couple of years it has definitely grown into our own sound. Anyone who can play with Roy Rogers & The Sons Of The Pioneers, which we did last year, and The Stylistics, who we did a couple of dates with just recently, and Thin Lizzy..."

When the break eventually came, it



### "UNTIL SOMETHING HAS A LABEL, PEOPLE AREN'T SURE IF IT'S COOL"



was from a most unexpected quarter. The story of how Dr. Feelgood, accompanied by Nick Lowe and then-tour-manager Jake Riviera, chanced upon Clover during their American visit in February '76 has been covered first hand by Cal Worthington in ZZ 62, so I won't bore you with a re-hash. Suffice it to say that when he returned to England, Jake and his new management partner Dave Robinson hijacked Phonogram's A&R person Nigel Grainger and flew him to San Francisco, where he saw Clover, liked it, and offered them the sort of long term deal they'd been waiting for.

So almost before they'd had time to put their belongings in storage and say goodbye to their friends, Clover found themselves on a plane to England with new management, and a new record company.

**A**lmost inevitably, the transition didn't go quite as smoothly as that. The speed of Clover's arrival had outstripped the grasp of red tape, so they turned up at Heathrow without the necessary papers from the Musicians Union, who have a rather irritating band-for-band arrangement with their American colleagues which governs who can and can't work, and when they can or can't do it.

As they let it slip to officials that they were a band coming in to play gigs, Clover were held up for hours and threatened with being sent back to the States, until the good Jake managed to round up the relevant authorization.

"I was almost in tears", John recalls. "I was out of my mind. I'd been up all night and fasting, and

I was a little too sensitive for that sort of scene. To go back after all that...I didn't have a cent, I wouldn't have even been able to get my stuff out of storage".

Once in the country, however, things have gone just fine. Tours with Linda Lewis, Thin Lizzy and Lynyrd Skynyrd and innumerable college and pub gigs have kept Clover working almost constantly since their UK debut at The Roundhouse on September 12th last year. In between they've squeezed the time to record the single 'Chicken Funk' with Nick Lowe, and their fine album, 'Unavailable' (Vertigo 6360 145), with Phonogram's *wunderkind* producer, Robert John 'Mutt' Lange.

"Nick was going to do the album, and he really wanted to do it with us, but he felt that from what he'd seen of Mutt, he'd be the best person to do us. Nick's way of working in the studio is very spontaneous and inspired, but he felt that we'd never really had time to work in the studio, and Mutt knows how to use that time. He really knows how to produce an album rather than just record it. We would have had a great time doing it with Nick, but ultimately I think we needed that professional perfection, especially since we really lacked that on the first album".

Whereas the Fantasy albums had some great songs and good playing on them, they did suffer from a dreadful production - especially 'Clover' - but on 'Unavailable' there's a whole bunch of excellent songs and a good sound. Some of the playing sounds just a mite hesitant - perhaps a result of the

extra care taken in the studio - but it's an admirable return to black vinyl, and one of which Clover are justifiably proud.

"We're pretty pleased with it", says John. "It's actually the first album that we've been able to listen to after the first couple of weeks. That first album cost \$1000 to make, and the facilities we did it on... you wouldn't believe it. The second album took a bit longer, but not much."

"We didn't know what we were doing...we didn't know any better, and I seriously think we were used as a tax write-off. Fantasy were making too much money from Creedence that it was in their interest to get rid of some of it. They had a couple of other bands - Alice Stuart and Redwing - who both made good records that never did anything".

"The week our second album came out", adds Alex, "it was put on the KSAN playlist in San Francisco, which is real prestigious. But Fantasy just said 'Well, we'll wait and see what happens'...they never really released it. It sold a few thousand copies in the Bay Area and the surrounding counties, and that was it. They weren't willing to pay any money to help us tour either. Bill Graham was going to put us on a tour and they wouldn't put up any money...all it needed was 5000 bucks or something".

In marked contrast to Fantasy's miserliness, Phonogram have obviously been very open-handed in helping Clover get on the road, supporting them while they're over here, and giving them advertising back-up, (though, as the band themselves acknowledge, it's the time before the sales figures start coming through that are the easiest for company/artist relationships).

In return, Clover have worked hard, long and effectively, and given them a very marketable album under their own name, as well as providing the backing (as they used to say on Juke Box Jury) for Twiggy's very listenable 'Please Get My Name Right' album, which features a great version of Alex's 'I Lie Awake And Dream Of You'.

Unlike most of the songs on their album, 'I Lie Awake...' was written over here. With the natural exception of 'Streets Of London', the rest were written during the long hiatus in Mill Valley, and that's where Clover have returned, to take a break and write new material for their next album, which will be recorded when they return here in about July.

They'll also be touring extensively through Britain again, and it looks as if for once an American band is going to be more or less settled in the UK, which makes a pleasant change. Clover might not be making as much money as Foghat or Rod Stewart, but I think we're getting the better end of the deal from the musical point of view.

PAUL KENDALL



Zigzag Motion Pictures Inc. proudly present their latest production. Starring Michael Nesmith and John H. Tobler, and featuring Clint Eastwood, Max Bygraves, and Bing Crosby...

# ON THE ROAD TO RIO

It was inevitable that when Michael Nesmith returned to London recently to promote jet lag and his single, 'Rio', we should meet again. My vibrant conversation led him to fall asleep during dinner, but I blame the avocados for that...

Anyway, we talked about this and that, mutually conveyed good wishes to our families, and watched his film of 'Rio', which is breathtaking and will be shown on the box if there is any justice (of course, the last issue of this wretched organ proves that justice is the last thing to expect). So the man is not surprised so much as thrilled to be back in chartland. "It's always nice to have your work be successful, especially when you don't compromise". When we spoke it was too early to say whether Mike's fellow countrymen possessed as much taste as we Brits in terms of buying the single, as it wasn't yet released there, although the album was doing very nicely, and rather better than its RCA predecessors.

While we're on the subject, you may be interested in the fact that Nesmith seems to have achieved another first, this time for leasing his records from the company for whom they were originally made, but not actually owning them. The advantage in that: "I have the worldwide rights to my work, and they get a percentage of everything I sell. At least now I control how I put it out". Which will, of course, prevent any more silliness like that woeful RCA compilation you all, with such boundless good taste, generally ignored last year.

Then we had to get to The Monkees. There are two versions of the answer to the question asking whether they will be reforming, and they are here in full for your delight.

Answer One: "Well, we've been planning to get together now for about six months, and we've signed a deal with a New Zealand record company, Kiwi Records (whose label, no doubt, is coloured Dark Tan), and we're planning to put out some short 8mm films, mostly of David's feet and some of Mickey's hands. I think I may contribute an elbow. They've been scripted by two Japanese cleaning women who have consented to get

together a pilot for the show, and so far we've got fourteen tracks recorded for the LP, all of them the same song". Have you any idea when the album will be out in England? "I don't think it'll ever come out here. You know how New Zealand is..."

Answer Two: "No, we're not getting back together. I don't know why Mickey came over here and said we were - perhaps it sounded like a good thing for him to say at the time. Get a little press, get a little news, stuff like that. I talked to him about it and told him I'd come over and deny it, so there you go...you can believe who you want to believe. It's feasible that we might rejoin to perhaps do a movie or a TV special, so that we got together on a basis like Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour getting

back together to do a 'Road' film. That makes sense. To get back together to do a rock'n'roll group as the Monkees is a lot like Raymond Burr going back into practice, and he was never a lawyer. It's not impossible that we would work together again, just highly unlikely. The only way I'd work with them is in that format. Maybe we'd do a TV special just for fun and be able to do something of a quality, and have a good time doing it. Maybe a film - 'Head was a good movie. I'd love to do something like that'.

**D**eciding intrepidly to pursue the point, I enquired whether any feedback was being received indicating the current popularity of The Monkees. "I think it's pretty safe to say we're not popular



**"It's 3.00a.m. and I'm still listening to this album."**



Damn you Bert Jansch!

I had you safely filed under Folk - and I don't LIKE Folk. But here I am marvelling at this new album of yours and scrabbling for words to describe it. I suppose what I can't work out is how something so, well - so relaxed - can keep me on the edge of my seat every time I hear it again. But what really keeps me pushing that old repeat button is a growing feeling that I'm listening to an album that's some kind of *definitive best*.

For those, unlike me, who know Bert Jansch and his music, I'm told that this album (as you'll see the title suggests) is something of a conundrum. In one way it represents a break - a step from his recent experimental albums with Charisma - and in another it's a reunion with his earlier, simpler roots.

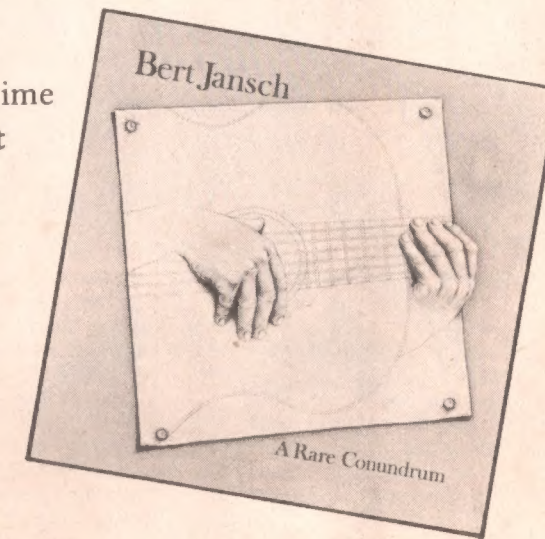
Anyway, to my ears, it's a *classic* and if you haven't given Bert Jansch a fair hearing, it's time you did. I think you'll be astounded by what you've been missing.

**Bert Jansch**  
**'A RARE CONUNDRUM'**  
IS HIS FINEST



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## ON THE ROAD TO RIO

now". So why does Mickey think you are? "I haven't a clue! I think we could probably make a pretty good movie, but it would be like doing the whole thing over again. I mean, the only movie we ever made was top notch. If anyone has a chance to see it, they should".

(And while we're on the subject, any of you out there who want to see it might find it useful to write expressing the fact to a dude named John Clayton, who lives at 28 Castle Rd., Allington Park, Maidstone, Kent, and has been trying to get the thing shown. John (who is a good cat, and a Nesmith (and Monkees) fanatic) will no doubt find it a help to be able to produce a sheaf of letters to the NFT or whoever, but don't forget to send him a s.a.e. if you want an answer.) Damn!...triple nested brackets in there and you don't see that often! (Not among the supposedly literate, anyway.)

Sorry Michael, back to you. "The TV shows weren't bad either, so from that standpoint...did you know that we made a TV special that was shown opposite the Academy Awards in 1969, so it fell into total obscurity? A total of two people saw it - I watched the Academy Awards! As far as being a sensational special, it was. For instance, we had Brian Auger when he had Julie Driscoll with him, and Buddy Miles (a doubtful privilege), and they were the acts that were on, but there was also one great rock'n'roll scene - playing on three white tiered grand pianos were Fats Domino, Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis doing 'Thunder

Boogie Woogie'. They were stacked on top of each other like a cake. It was a nutty special, but I liked it, and in terms of doing stuff like that, it might be fun to do. I may do that *without* The Monkees".

The elderly author of this piece, although not remembering a Monkees special, does remember the three-tiered piano scene, which was genuinely unforgettable. The fact that it was The Monkees having been long forgotten seems to indicate that it was the highlight of the show. Anyway, we mulled around the possibilities of Arista being the new label for The Monkees. It seems as logical as anywhere else, and more so than most, and they do own the old Monkees' catalogue. So why don't they make the records available again? I'm sure that a budget priced re-issue series would be a commercial proposition, if not a boxed set of the whole lot (eight albums, plus one to be compiled of the odd singles) for £12 a la Readers' Digest... who I'm reliably informed sold fifty thousand boxed sets of seven albums by Max Bygraves in a few weeks. Kendall and Needs don't know these things, you know. (Perhaps that's because Kendall and Needs don't hang out with old bozos who've got nothing better to talk about than Max Bygraves - Ed.)

Then we discussed the possibility of a tour. There was one rumoured for about now, and there's ultra vague talk of an autumn visit, but it's pretty unlikely. "Right now I don't have a show. I don't have a band, I don't perform with anybody, and I'm really more heavily into making films and doing things like that. Every time I go out on stage I want to do something new, something different. I've been playing my guitar on stage, been doing 'Hi,

how are you' sort of shows, and now I'd like to do something boffo... sock 'em...wow! So if I can rent the dirigible and the fifty seven porpoises and get them all over here, that'll be a start. And all those grapes I have to get in...it's going to take a big effort".

Do you still feel that this sceptered isle contributed strongly to your artistic rebirth? "It didn't contribute strongly...it was singularly responsible. The English people have been very good to me, and I'm very grateful for it". Which means that we will certainly be seeing some more gigs, although quite when is a difficult question to answer.

**R**everting to 'Rio', (A good song title in itself, that phrase...like 'Wandering To Woking' or 'Nesting In Knaphill'), I wondered (lonely as a crowd) whether it had been conceived as a single or whether ears at Island had selected it as such. "I knew it was a single the minute I wrote it. I sang it about a hundred times in a row when I wrote it - "this song is so much fun" - and I had a good time with it, but I didn't know at the time whether (as usual) I was going to have the same ridiculous battle I've had in the past with record companies. I'd go in and say 'Wow, I've got this great new single, guys' and everybody would collectively yawn. I was really happy when Island said 'Yep, that's it, it's a good sounding single'. You know, my singles are generally pretty weird anyway".

Come on - 'Shelly's Blues', 'Silver Moon', 'Joanne' - are they weird? "You ought to talk to my publisher. I go up and say 'Fellows, can you

think of anyone to sing my songs?', and they say 'No, they're too weird'. So I say 'What do you mean, too weird?', and they say 'Well, they're just too weird, you know, they don't have a hook or nothing. You need to write more commercial songs'. Well, I'm doing my best, fellows. I don't sit down and think 'I know what I'll do. This afternoon I'll go sit somewhere, and I'll see if I can write something so abstract, so obscure, very little melody line, break the rhythm up, and make it impossible to hum'...that's what they accuse me of doing".

OK then...surely 'Rio' wasn't conceived as a single at the length it is on the LP? "Yes it was. You see, to me there is no such thing as a long record, only a boring one. I've heard records that are only two minutes long that are boring, and they got boring after the first bar. But if it holds your interest, then why not play it? I have a lot of fun selling that (thought) to people too. There's a lot of radio stations that say 'No, we can't possibly play it'. Then once in a while some kind of breakthrough happens, like with The Doors or early Dylan singles, and radio stations will go with it, because they recognise that it's just as good programming to have long interesting records as it is to have short interesting ones. The only difference is that you can sell more commercial time with a short record than with a long one".

How about the film, then, how long did it take to put together? "Four days. A lot of the time we spent making it was just mistakes. It was the first time I've ever produced a film like this, and it was difficult, because it was made to the music, not the music added just as an afterthought. In order to make it interesting at all, rather than me just standing playing guitar or some other bizarre thing, we had to script it out so that it would work according to the music, and edit it according to the music. Now all that stuff took a lot of time, energy and effort, and there was no precedent for it, so as we tried to achieve some of the things we conceived of, we just spent more money than we needed to, because of the mistakes. So the expense of the first one (and it wasn't cheap!) is not significant and not indicative of the expense of the next ones. We're going to film the whole LP'. And put it out as a feature film? "Well, I don't know, but if I continue to make the same type of mistakes it'll cost more than 'Cleopatra'".

**A**fter his experience with 'The Prison' last year (I was the person working to get the record into British shops, and in failing to do so, I inadvertently came close to finishing his career in this country), it came as a relief to me that Michael had got himself a real record company, but somewhat of a surprise that it was

the British end of Island who had signed him initially, rather than the American end where a good friend of mine (and a fellow Nesmith believer) called Jeff Walker worked. Seemingly the idea of selling 'The Prison' by mail order certainly worked, and as a result Michael had begun to control a small distribution network of his own. However, the problems of controlling it became too time-consuming, and that was the reason for moving back into conventional record marketing. However, the final aim is to have his own wholly owned distribution, although he's happy enough for the time being.

This led on to a discussion of the Pacific Arts label. As they had Kaleidoscope already, was there an intention of expanding the artist roster? "We don't have an artist roster and we don't have Kaleidoscope. We don't sign our acts exclusively, we only go product by product and that's the way we'll always work. One of the things we're eliminating is flesh peddling. We don't sign an artist just to hang onto him and say 'Well, maybe you'll make it and maybe you won't. But if you do, baby, we're going to be around, and if you don't then please don't call us'. It's more of an attitude of 'Let's see what your latest work is and if there is some way we can contribute to its success'. We're in the record business, not the management business".

Michael would also not give any

indication of who they might be working with in the future, so perhaps Jerry Gilbert will have to wait a little longer for the new Biff Rose LP, which was once rumoured to be on the way from Pacific Arts.

At this point Michael is not working with any other musicians, the Red Rhodes era having finally passed with the Drury Lane gig at the end of 1975. "There's just my wife, my house, my dog and my truck. We're called The Domiciles".

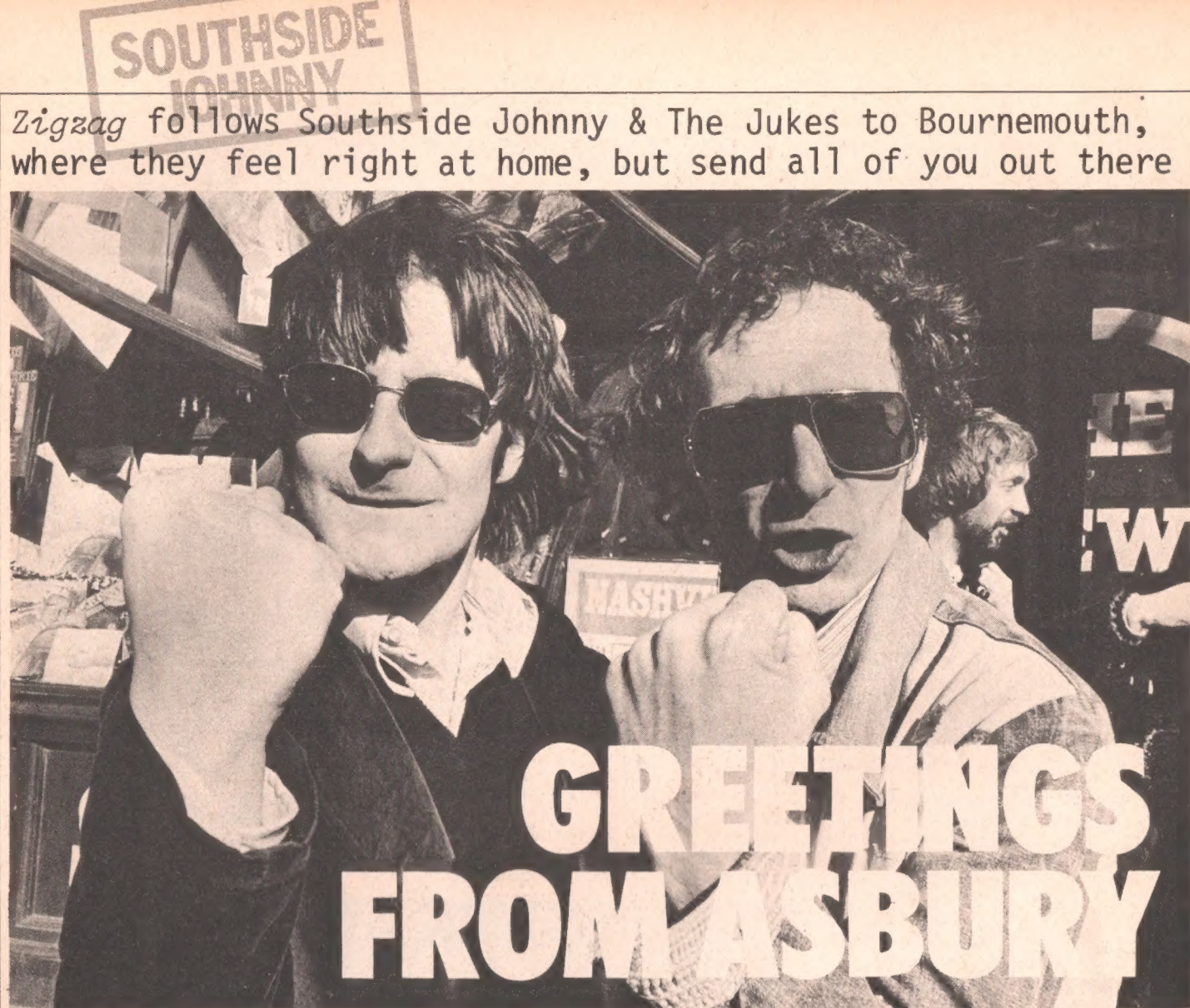
Finally, I enquired whether Michael lived near Clint Eastwood, as the recent TV documentary on him was made in Carmel, where Michael lives. "I think I may, but I don't know Clint. I see him wandering up and down the street every once in a while, but I don't know whether he sees me". Do you cross the street in case he shoots you? "No, I go right by him. I do look for the bulge in his jacket, but so far...nothing". I was just wondering whether you could ask him to sort out this magazine in his inimitable manner...

Oh well. As always, refusing to be confined to a single part feature, the next issue will have a collection of interesting trivia concerning Michael's career, pre-, post- and during Monkeetime, compiled by the afore-mentioned J.Clayton and myself. Unless, of course, someone decides to interview Keith Reid's dog.

JOHN TOBLER







Zigzag follows Southside Johnny & The Jukes to Bournemouth, where they feel right at home, but send all of you out there

OK kids, settle down...it's geography lesson time again. Open your atlases to the Eastern seaboard of the United States, home in on the modest agricultural state of New Jersey, and looking between the urban sprawl of Newark and the more salubrious environs of Atlantic City, we find the town of Asbury Park (pop. about 20,000).

Time was, some twenty years ago, when Asbury Park and the rest of the New Jersey coastline was very popular with the folks from the massive conurbation to the north, and they used to come down in their thousands to sample the sea, sand and amusements. Times change, though, and those same folks now tend to go to Florida, or the West Coast, or the Bahamas, leaving Asbury Park and its fellow resorts with a much more tenuous hold on prosperity.

Johnny Lyon remembers the good times and the bad, having lived in Asbury Park for most of his twenty eight years...long before his affinity with Chicago blues earned him the nickname of Southside, and continuing to do so after he, his band the Asbury Jukes, and an old buddy by the name of Bruce Springsteen had taken the name of Asbury Park around the world.

"Yeah, it's a pretty typical resort", he barks, in a voice that sounds like it's in the terminal

stages of throat cancer. "It's on the shore, and it's got lots of bars, amusements, and a boardwalk. You go swimming, there are some nice beaches, and a lot of bars with bands playing. It jumps in the summer and dies in the winter."

"It has gone downhill over the last 15 years, though. It's become real seedy, and about eight years ago there was a bunch of riots among the blacks, because of the really bad conditions in the slum section at the west end of town, and of course that drove away trade. For a long time it was really sleazy, but it's just about getting back on its feet now. The bar scene is very much rejuvenated and a lot of them are staying open all year round, and the local population of Monmouth County is coming out during the winter to support the bands".

We may as well get it straight right now that for the purposes of this story, the word "bar" does not refer to anything like your local. The Stone Pony, the most celebrated of all Asbury Park's music joints, used to hold some 500 persons, but was recently expanded to accommodate in excess of 800, so when we talk about a band making "good money" from working five nights a week in bars, you'll know we mean GOOD money.

Even when Johnny was but a lad, the Asbury Park bar scene was flour-

ishing, with the bands churning out the Top 40 for the consumption of the tourists, but young Master Lyon had his tastes and heritage guided along very different lines, thanks to his father, who worked in the local Post Office but had been a musician in the 30s.

"He listened to Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, black blues, stuff like that, so I grew up listening to Billie Holiday and Jimmy Rushing, and that's the kind of stuff I liked. I listened to a lot of black radio stations - blues, rhythm and blues...that's the sort of music I was exposed to. You see, the sort of music I play and like is very intense and emotional, whereas most pop music is so superficial that there's no contest, for me. The way my taste is developed and my mental faculties work, when I hear Tony Orlando and Dawn, or a Captain & Tennille song, I dismiss it. Subconsciously it just doesn't register, whereas if I hear Elmore James or something like that, it's so strong that it grabs me and I have to listen".

While most of his contemporaries in the early sixties lapped up Bobby Rydell, and then The Beach Boys and The Beatles, Johnny gravitated towards the few other people who shared his proclivities,

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## GREETINGS FROM ASBURY

although his early experience of actually performing was limited to an occasional impromptu rendition at a party, or in the street. When he was 16, however, he joined The Sonny Kenn Blues Band playing bass, as immortalised in Mr. Springsteen's liner notes for the first album. "Johnny was terrible. This was a person that could not play bass", quoth Bruce...a little unkindly, you might feel. "Not true", says Johnny, anxious to set the record straight, "I played bass very well for three years, on and off".

School was followed by a brief period at the local college, supposedly studying English Literature, but in fact spending more time singing and playing round bars, and eventually (after three abortive attempts), Johnny quit to see a bit of the world.

"My parents didn't want me to give up college, but they didn't mind my becoming a musician. I did occasional jobs too...I worked at the Post Office, worked for guys who cut down trees with buzzsaws, I washed dishes and worked in music stores...all kinds of things. I went to Texas, Colorado, California, Delaware, New York. I wasn't thumbing around or anything...I went to a place, stayed there for a while, saw what action I could see, and if nothing was happening I moved somewhere else.

"Eventually I came back to Asbury Park in about '68 to see what was happening, and there was a good music scene, so I hung around. One good place was called The Student Prince, and there were other bars where if you put together a band that played Top 40 you could make decent money, and then there was the Upstage Club".

Johnny describes the Upstage as "one of those scenes like the Crawdaddy in Richmond, Surrey, which lasts for a while, then becomes very stylised and all of the heavy people move onto the next step".

Indeed, the Upstage did only last a couple of years before Tom Potter, the owner, took the money and ran, but in that time the seeds were sown for the blossoming of Asbury Park. Johnny met up with Bruce Springsteen, Miami Steve van Zandt, assorted guys who went on to be in the E Street Band, and people he would be playing with, including Kevin Kavanaugh the Jukes keyboard player, as well as a whole host of musicians destined to remain in obscurity.

The easy-going musical policy of the Upstage meant that it was often used for jamming into the wee small hours and bands were formed and broken up in the space of a set, but the experience was invaluable.

"It catered for the younger kids, because at the time you had to be 21

to drink in bars in New Jersey, so all the kids who couldn't get a fake ID had no place where they could go to hear the music that was going on. So this guy opened the Upstage, which was two floors - a coffee shop on one and the dance place on the other. It was done up really stupidly garish, but it was great for us because it was very relaxed, very loose...if it had been any classier most of us would have felt out of place. It was an exciting period, because although there was virtually no money and no formal bands, there was a lot of exchanging ideas and meeting people".

Come the demise of the Upstage, Johnny was sharing an apartment with Miami Steve and a couple of other musicians called Hots and Albie, and since the bare necessities of paying the rent and eating called for an increase in funds, they expanded to the other local bars, playing in

bands like Albie & The Hired Hands (which also included Kevin Kavanaugh), the Sundance Blues Band and Dr. Zoom & The Sonic Boom (both of which included Bruce Springsteen), and Johnny (or Southside as he'd now become) raised his income from about 40 dollars a week to nearer 70.

**A**fter a while the travelling itch returned, though, and Southside made the 300 mile trip down to Richmond, Virginia with Bruce, who by now had the first incarnation of The E Street Band together. Bruce was supporting Mitch Ryder at the Richmond Arena, and when Southside got up to lend a little support on vocals and harmonica he was spotted by a local blues band called Studio B, who asked him to join them. He did, and ended up staying in Richmond for about a year, acquiring a little studio experience and a wife

before heading back to Asbury Park.

"The Richmond scene died quite rapidly. For one reason, the main club was this real nice place over an autobody shop, run by this nice guy who treated us real good. The place held about 400, and it was a real good scene...the wellspring of all the best bands in the area. But one day the owner of the club got arrested, because while we were up there playing and having a good time, some of his cronies were out stealing cars and taking them to the autobody shop to have them repainted, so they could take them to Washington DC and sell them. When he got caught the club closed down, and that was it. It wasn't the same any more, and the band split up".

Also living in Richmond at the time were Miami Steve and David Sancious, who had been left behind while Bruce temporarily broke up

his band to go to New York in search of a record company contract. Between them they put together an acoustic blues trio, and when they got home this expanded into the Bank Street Blues Band, which again boasted the talents of Kevin Kavanaugh.

Once more this proved to be merely another rung up the ladder, as Miami



Steve got an offer to join The Dovells - whose main claim to fame is a brace of hit singles in the early 60s, 'Bristol Stomp' and 'You Can't Sit Down', and the fact that Len Barry was once their lead vocalist - in early '74, and went off to Las Vegas. The band fell apart, and in the October Southside linked up with an aggregation going under the name of the Blackberry Booze Band, who didn't actually do too much, but did have a mean drummer in the unique person of Kenny 'Popeye' Pentifallo.

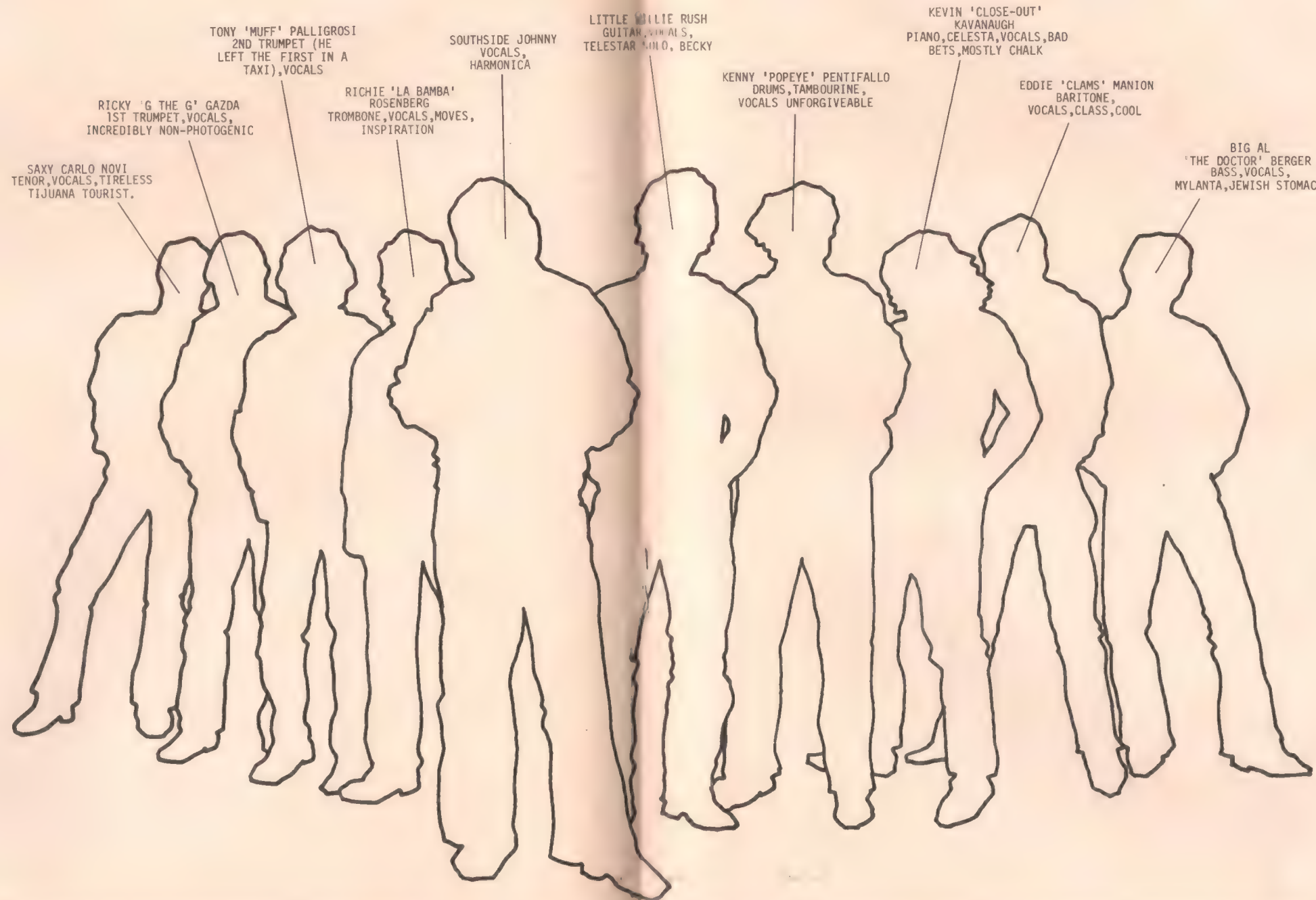
"I really had to push them along, because we weren't getting any jobs and we weren't rehearsing, but once we did they didn't like it, so we got rid of the founding members of the band...in a nice way of course".

Only Kenny was allowed the dubious privilege of surviving Southside's pogrom against the Blackberry Booze Band, and in June '75 the name was changed to Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes, by which time Miami Steve had returned from Las Vegas, tenor sax player Carlo Novi and the ubiquitous Kevin Kavanaugh had been recruited, and the band had a three-nights-a-week residency at the Stone Pony club. To add final insult to injury, the boys then elbowed the bass player who had originally been the leader of the BBB, and in came Al Berger, who had been playing in The Dovells with Miami.

Unfortunately, Miami Steve hardly had time to unpack his guitar before he was off again, accepting Bruce Springsteen's offer to play with the E Street Band. Steve was replaced by Willie Rush, but it was only *au revoir*, not *adieu*, and when he got back from a national tour just after Christmas he took the band into New York's Record Plant studios to make some demos.

Despite the fact that they had to use a bunch of schoolkids as the horn section in the interests of economy, and despite the fact that they didn't have much collective studio experience (except for Kenny, who had made an album with The Lavender Blues Band, which should have been released on Atlantic, but wasn't), they must have done a pretty good job, because those tapes certainly had the desired effect of getting people interested.

"Steve Popovich, who is head of Epic's A&R department, said we'd be signed to a worldwide agreement and then make the first album, but their lawyers had to work on the contract with our lawyer, and it was going to take at least six weeks to come up with a contract that everybody could agree to, and Steve was due to go out on tour with Bruce again after six weeks, so we just had time to record the album, mix it and everything...and we did it, even though we had to finance it ourselves. If we hadn't done it then, we would have been waiting months for Steve. We borrowed \$25,000 from a lot of people I don't even know now, but who all got their money back".





"At one time there were discussions about getting someone else in to produce the album, but we didn't think we could get anybody else in who was better than Steve. Although he had no real experience in the studio as far as producing goes, he knew the band, he knew the material, he knew what he wanted, and he's a brilliant arranger...he's got these fantastic million dollar ears. So why not use him and Jimmy Iovine, who we knew from when he engineered for Bruce and we could browbeat into getting what we wanted".

'I Don't Want To Go Home' (Epic EPC 81515) came out last Spring in the States, though it had to wait until November for a British release, and it just gets better with every hearing. The balance of new songs and golden oldies like Sam & Dave's 'Broke Down Piece Of Man' and Solomon Burke's 'Got To Get You Off My Mind' sit side by side in perfect harmony, and between them The Jukes and Miami Steve conjure up the magic of early 60s R&B with a sureness that has to be intuitive.

"We thought the first album should be representative of what the group was and where it came from. It's one thing to go out and do a first album of all original material, but people can't get a handle on you then, and I don't like that. It seems like a decent thing to do...a sort of acknowledgement of your roots, which a lot of people don't want to make".

It isn't just nostalgia, though. The Jukes may not contribute any original material themselves, but they don't really need to when they get given stuff by Messrs. Springsteen, who has two songs on 'I Don't Want To Go Home', and Miami Steve, who has three including an absolute killer in the title track.

"Bruce's songs were old ones that he had left over from a band a few years back, and when we told him we were looking for material he suggested them. Steve's were written specially for us, though, except 'I Don't Want To Go Home', which was for Ben E. King. He met Ben E. King when he was with The Dovells, but he couldn't quite get it together to go up to one of his big idols and say 'I've got a song for you'...so he gave it to us".

With the completion of the album, The Jukes went back to the New Jersey bars, where a combination of regular work for good money and the financial support they were getting from Epic allowed them to gradually expand the group. Sax player Ed Manion and trumpet player Tony Pallagrosi arrived together in April '76, and were joined later in the year by Ricky Gazda, who had guested on trumpet on the first album, and finally Richie 'La Bamba' Rosenberg, trombone virtuoso and Malteser addict.

Obviously dragging a mob like that round the globe is a pretty expensive business - especially when they seem to have a competition going to see who can put away the most food at one sitting - but The Jukes are blessed with an efficient, self-

contained organisation (headed by Miami Steve, who's now their manager) and a sympathetic record company.

"That's where record companies can have bands by the balls. To make a decent, well-produced album, you've got to have at least \$30,000. If you're going to go in and do songs with horns and strings, and do them in a nice place, then you gotta have a lot of money. There are very few bands who can finance that, and very few managers who are prepared to, and that's where the record company starts dictating terms.

"Fortunately we've found a company that doesn't tell us what to do. They take the attitude that if they sign an act which is self-contained and knows what it wants to do, then the reason they signed it is because they have faith in it. They just help us with the things that we can't do - like publicity".

Eventually, last September, The Jukes moved out of the bars and onto the road, doing their first national tour supporting a whole bunch of different people, and meeting Graham Parker & The Rumour, with whom they have recently completed a very successful British tour.

It's often the case with bands who are hot stuff in the sweaty, intimate confines of a bar, that they're incapable of getting the same atmosphere in a bigger place, but anybody who saw the Southside/Parker package (and you should be seriously questioning your sanity if you didn't) will tell you that The Jukes have had no such problem. The few big stadium shows that they've done in the States haven't been unqualified triumphs, but put them in a medium-sized theatre or college, and they will fill the stage with the sort of wing-to-wing energy that's normally only found in the top soul shows, and the air with a sound that alternates between the joyful and the heartrending.

**W**ith the album having shifted around 100,000 copies in the States - which isn't exactly going to make Frampton break into a cold sweat but isn't at all bad for a debut - it was inevitable that the Jukes would return to the studios when they finished touring, and sure enough the result - 'This Time It's For Real' (EPC 81909) - has been available for your listening pleasure since late March. Again Miami produces, and this time he's contributed (with a little help from young Bruce) eight of the ten songs, with the emphasis on a bitter-sweet smoothness, rather than the rough and ready thrust which characterised the first album.

It isn't just nostalgia, though. The Jukes may not write any of their own material, but they don't really need to when they're being given stuff by Messrs. Springsteen, who has two songs on 'I Don't Want To Go Home', and Van Zandt, who has

three, including an absolute killer in the title track.

Extra colour (as if it were needed) is added once more by the judicious use of guest vocalists. On the first album Ronnie Spector had duetted with Southside on Bruce's 'You Mean So Much To Me', and Lee Dorsey shared a magnificently melodramatic 'How Come You Treat Me So Bad'; and on the new one, The Coasters, The Drifters and The Satins are variously employed to give the sound that final touch of authenticity.

"Ronnie came down to the session because she knew the engineer (Iovine) who was working with us, and we asked her to sing on one of the cuts that she liked, never dreaming that she'd take us up on it, but she did. Then we talked to the guy who'd signed us to the record company and told him we had a Lee Dorsey type song, and he said 'Oh, he's been signed to Epic for two years', so we said 'Why not bring him up to sing this song'...and he did.

"The Drifters, The Coasters and The Satins we wanted specifically for each song, because that's the style of song that we associate with them. The concept of The Drifters that you have here is a very modern, almost disco/pop group, but that's Johnny Moore's Drifters, whereas The Drifters in the States are what we consider to be the '58-'60 Drifters with Charlie Thomas... 'There Goes My Baby' and 'Save The Last Dance For Me'. There are more than that too, just as there are more than one Coasters...but we used the Original Coasters. Both those groups were so popular that guys would leave the group, get a couple of other singers and say 'OK...we're The Drifters'. I've seen two or three Drifters myself!"

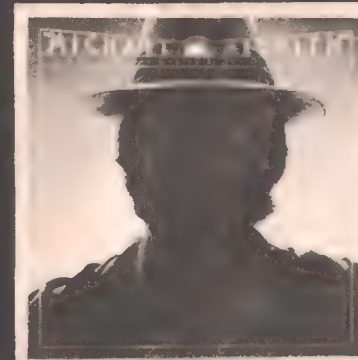
And that's just about it, as Southside reverts to his brusque, abusive persona, leaps to his feet shouting "Right...that's it...you're through!" and strides out of the dressing room to do a soundcheck.

Except to tell you that Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes are not merely stars of stage and record, but also of the silver screen. They appeared in all their glory in a movie called 'Hester Street', playing the undemanding role of a band. The film was (or is) about the fortunes of an underground newspaper and its staff, who in one scene attend a reception for a new group. The Jukes apparently play 'Sweeter Than Honey' and Sam Cooke's 'Having A Party', which is the climax to their regular stage act, while Garry, one of their roadies, puts himself in line for Oscar nominations by saying a few lines and getting punched out by one of the stars.

Don't get too excited about the prospect of seeing this milestone in motion pictures, though...it's unlikely to get a British showing. But Southside Johnny and his unsavoury henchmen are planning a return to these shores in the flesh later in the year...and that really is something to start drooling about.

PAUL KENDALL

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To mark the tenth year of Mr. Richard Thompson's illustrious career as a purveyor of fine music to the public at large, we take an extremely fleeting look through his back pages.

# REELIN' IN THE YEARS

RICHARD THOMPSON



THE FULL HOUSE/LIVE AT THE TROUBADOUR LINE-UP AT THE 100 CLUB (WE THINK).

Born and raised in fair London town, Richard left school in 1966 to become a designer of stained-glass windows, but at the same time got involved with Simon Nicol and Ashley 'Tyger' Hutchings, sharing musical interests as seemingly disparate as jug-band music, blues (very vogueish at the time with the John Mayall crusade just beginning to pick up momentum) and - even at this early stage - traditional folk.

After various permutations of name and personnel, they became Fairport Convention (named after the house 'Fairport' in Muswell Hill where most of the band lived), and Richard stayed with them through five albums and innumerable comings and goings.

The history of Fairport has already been covered in various family trees (see especially ZZ23 and the front of the 'History Of' double album) and articles, so I won't waste time and space rehashing it, but those five albums are a fascinating demonstration of Richard's gradual synthesis of his various influences - primarily transatlantic in the early days, then increasingly homegrown - into a formidably unique style.

Although mostly known and respected as a guitarist during his Fairport days, Richard also became an

increasingly accomplished songwriter, contributing such gems as 'Meet On The Ledge' and 'Genesis Hall' before co-writing the majestic 'Sloth' with Dave Swarbrick as his parting shot.

In 1970, by the way, just after Sandy Denny's departure from the fold, the five man 'Full House' Fairport toured the States. In the course of that tour, the recently-released 'Live At The Troubadour' was recorded, and Richard turned down an invitation to join the just-forming Eagles! In such moments is the course of rock music changed!

## 1971

The year started sensationally with Richard leaving Fairport after some five years to go into session work. Most of '71 was spent in this area, with much of his playing done with friends like Sandy Denny and Mike & Lal Waterson, but also with people as varied as Nick Drake and John Cale.

"It was a livelihood. A job's a job. It does take away some of the essence of music, because it becomes something forced unless one's very

careful. A lot of music is like pouring it into a particular shaped bottle, and that's not always the best way...it's sometimes better to just let it spill anywhere, to see where it lands.

"It did drive me crackers, I must admit. I was doing it very intensively at one point...all the time. I never intended to go into it, it just kind of cropped up. I didn't have any plans when I left Fairport".

Towards the end of the year, he was rumoured to be working with Tyger Hutchings, who'd just left Steel-eye Span, and Royston Wood in the embryonic stages of the Albion Country Band, but he didn't stay to see it reach maturity.

## 1972

Apart from doing more session work - notably with Sandy Denny, whose touring band he joined - and starting to work the folk clubs later in the year as part of an acoustic trio with Simon Nicol (who left Fairport at the end of '71) and Linda Peters, one of the singers on the periphery of the Fairport family, Richard also got back to more personal recording.

In April, along with a whole collection of people from the Fairport/Fotheringay/Steeleye mob, aptly calling themselves The Bunch, he helped make an album of golden oldies called 'Rock On'. Unfortunately it sounds like the sort of thing one might indulge as a studio warm-up before getting down to the real work, and it's really pretty lame.

Somewhat better is a similar 'Various Artists' workout on traditional Morris dance tunes, going under the title of (wait for it!) 'Morris On'.

Best of the lot, though, is his first solo album from June '72, 'Henry The Human Fly'. It got a release in the States the following January (unlike its superb successor, which inexplicably had to wait until this year, when it was made half of a rather strange double album called 'Richard Thompson Live (Almost)' al-

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## REELIN' IN THE YEARS

ong with selected parts of the 'guitar, vocal' anthology), and was greeted with a very perceptive review from Bud Scoppa in *Rolling Stone* who said:

"The cover and title express Thompson's sardonic humour, but the music is dense and mysterious. His songs have the melodic structures, stylizations and sound of British folk music - every individual element, from the electric guitars to the accordion to Richard's vocals, conspires to form a dense drone that resonates from one end of the album to the other without pause".

When I first heard it, I thought that the production of the album was surprisingly bad for John Wood (who had always managed to get an excellent sound for Fairport), but I've since decided that its murkiness is very apt...giving the blend of ancient and modern that had come to be Fairport's area of operations (and which Richard has since exploited to a new pitch of subtlety) an over-riding air of misty, dark, uncivilised times.

Scoppa concluded: "I've heard that since the album, Richard decided to give up his own music for a while in order to go back to school. That one of the most knowledgeable musicians in all popular or folk music would choose to go deeper suggests that the man has a great deal left to say and is still working on the means with which to say it. Thompson remains the central figure in this traditional-modern sphere".

How true.

## 1973

Not a particularly exciting year - not for a chronicler of Thompson's Life & Times, anyway. Richard did a bunch of sessions and continued to work the folk clubs with Simon and Linda (who'd now become Mrs. Thompson), but apart from that the only item of note is the recording of 'I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight'...which had to wait for the best part of a year to be released.

But what an item! In my humble opinion 'I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight' rates among the finest records that the rock genre has ever produced, reaffirming Richard's stature as a guitarist, and establishing him (almost out of the blue, despite his excellent compositions for Fairport) as a songwriter of the very highest calibre.

Predominantly pessimistic to an almost suicidal degree, the lyrics paint a picture of the world that is almost the equivalent of a Breughel



painting - crowded, bustling and confused, but also sordid and miserable, with the only hope of escape offered by death. Apart from the desperate gaiety of the title track, the music is suitably sombre, with hymnal vocal harmonies supporting the aching purity of Linda's voice and the vulnerable fragility of Richard's.

Heaven only knows what personal torment brought Richard to the dark outlook evident on 'The Bright Lights', but it really is a case of "pain is genius", because the mood conjured up by the rich blend of words and music is quite abnormally potent...anybody who can remain unmoved by the sheer desolation of 'The End Of The Rainbow' must have

a soul made of prefabricated concrete.

One of the most extraordinary, and exciting things about the album, is its thorough Englishness. I don't mean that in any kind of jingoistic way, but as a writer of contemporary songs (as opposed to people working in the traditional field) Richard's only rival in the conjuring-up of the span of English heritage is Roy Harper. The songs are full of juxtaposed time-frames (as Lowell George would say), ranging from the Piers Plowmanesque mediaeval darkness of 'We Sing Hallelujah', through the bawdy Elizabethan flavour of 'Down Where The Drunkards Roll' and the industrial revolution consciousness of 'The Little Beggar Girl' to a

completely contemporary reference to the telephone in 'Has He Got A Friend For Me'. In several cases, these impressions are reinforced by the use of instrumentation relevant to the eras...the krumphorns of Gryphon on 'We Sing Hallelujah', for example, and the CWS Silver Band on the title track.

It could be an absurd mess...in fact it's brilliant.

## 1974

The spring of '74 saw Richard, Linda and Simon make a return to electric instruments and the concert stage. To coincide with the release of 'The Bright Lights' (at last!), they put together a band which toured with Traffic under the name of Sour Grapes.

This band consisted of the three of them, plus bassist Steve Borrell (who had been with the Canterbury band Spirogyra, who made albums for Polydor and Charisma, if I remember rightly. Before that he was at school with my good self...small world, isn't it?) and drummer Willie Murray.

To say that the project was less than a total success is about the kindest thing one could say. On the one occasion that I saw the band, the rhythm section sounded desperately ponderous and under-rehearsed, and my spies inform me that this was the normal state of affairs. There were extenuating circumstances, however.

"The bass player only joined us about four hours before the first gig in Dundee. He came up on the train and we rehearsed for about two hours and then did it. They did very well, in fact".

Maybe so, but Sour Grapes got trodden at the end of the tour, and from then until the current aggregation Richard and Linda worked either as a duo or with a pick-up band.

The latter months of '74 gave rise to the recording of their second album, 'Hokey Pokey', using almost the same people who had done such justice to 'The Bright Lights', with the addition of Ian Whiteman on keyboards and flute, who has been with them ever since and is in the new band, and fiddler Ali Bain from The Boys Of The Lough. One interesting change, however, was that Simon Nicol took over the producer's chair from Richard.

"I just wanted to get a different ear in. People hear things differently, so it was to get a different perspective on it. It's quite difficult...you can get very close to something, and need someone that's a little bit more objective.

"It's good to have a change. I've worked with John (Wood, Richard and Fairport's longtime producer and engineer) so much that it's good to chop it around, but it has been so good that one's reluctant to change it. I've always been satisfied with

the quality of the sound that we've had on the records. What I've thought would be more beneficial for us is some other opinion on the arrangement side, because the final thing usually sounds alright to me without getting into tricks and overdubs".

Not surprisingly, then, 'Hokey Pokey' is the most fully arranged of all Richard's albums, and certainly the most instantly commercial (in fact, I seem to remember the title track enjoying some modest success as a single). The songs are roughly 50/50 uptempo and melancholy, with their imagery again incorporating a strange blend of period references ('The Sun Never Shines On The Poor', for example, refers to 'The old Sally Army sound', jeans, and "simpleton fools"), but the overall atmosphere conjured up is of the Edwardian era - although that judgement is probably influenced by the cover art, which is redolent of that period.

Several of the songs are very fine, especially the one just mentioned and 'A Heart Needs A Home', but the very lack of a consistent, coherent mood, and the shortage of Richard's incomparable guitar playing in deference to the rounder group sound, makes 'Hokey Pokey' a slight comedown after its illustrious predecessor.

## 1975

Probably the busiest year of Richard and Linda's career. It began in February with their first ever headline tour of Britain, which extended right through to a concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on April 25th.

Most of the dates were done by just Richard and Linda as a duo, with Richard augmenting his guitar playing with the occasional use of a foot keyboard (I've no idea what that is...I didn't see them at a gig where they used it), but for the London date they were joined by the rhythm kings, Mattacks and Pegg, and John Kirkpatrick on accordion. These three also played with them on a shorter tour later in the year, and that band is captured for posterity on the three magnificent tracks on 'guitar, vocal' that were recorded at Oxford Poly in the November.

'Hokey Pokey' was released halfway through the tour, in March, and once again the critical reaction was very strong, even if sales didn't exactly set new heights.

The most important occurrence of '75, however, was undoubtedly Richard and Linda's embracing of the Sufi religion, a somewhat esoteric branch of Mohammedanism. This led them to leave their North London home for a squat in Hammersmith, where they apparently hoped to find an atmosphere more in harmony with their new lifestyle, and their new faith had a profound influence on

their next album, 'Pour Down Like Silver', which was released to coincide with the November tour.

As their last album before the long hiatus, 'Pour Down Like Silver' - a bit like 'Blonde On Blonde' - has been given plenty of time to insinuate itself. For me, it doesn't quite carry the same impact as 'The Bright Lights', but it's indisputably a superb record.

In stark contrast to the involved, sprightly cover of 'Hokey Pokey', the sleeve of 'Pour Down Like Silver' just carries stark head shots of Richard & Linda on either side, both with distant, rather forbidding looks in their eyes. The music on the inside is also sparse, even ascetic, compared with the fully-arranged sound of 'Hokey Pokey', but it is far from forbidding.

Richard's explanation for the relatively simple instrumental sound is disarmingly simple: "I suppose you could say it's 'dearranged', because for the rhythm tracks there weren't any musicians around at the time... we could only find a bass player and drummer, so quite a lot of it was done as a three-piece. I didn't have many ideas for things to go over the top...so it was just a lack of ideas. I quite liked it loose, but hearing it now, I don't like it very much. It sounds a bit lifeless to me".

Mind you, he says that about all his albums. It's very unsettling to go and interview someone whose work you've always held in the highest regard, and hear them dismiss them in these sort of terms:

"I tend to think they're a bit boring, actually. I'm not into the sentiments of them anymore...they don't interest me. They're sentiments that I might feel, but I don't confirm...I'm not interested in confirming them in myself through music. There are parts of oneself that one doesn't like, you know, so you want to forget it and turn away from it, rather than confirm it by playing it out in front of an audience".

In that sense one would have expected 'Pour Down Like Silver' to appeal more to Richard, because in a sense, it's a less personal album than its predecessors. At least, with the possible exception of the self-reproaching 'Hard Luck Stories', it's less introverted lyrically and less ostensibly assertive in the music. It's mostly low-key, with the lyrical mood of weariness and longing for change complemented by music that is spacious and simple, but with great warmth and depth.

'Beating The Retreat', with Timi Donald's stark, almost military drumbeat underpinning Richard's intensely melodic guitar, and the stately flow of 'Night Comes In' are standout tracks, but for me the *tour de force* is the concluding medley of 'Dimming Of The Day', a beautifully wistful tender love song, and the acoustic instrumental 'Dargai', which brings the album to a suitably restful close.

In an interview with *Street Life*



## REELIN' IN THE YEARS

shortly after the album's release, Richard spoke about the difference that his faith has made to his life, and presumably his music as well.

"I was heading in a particular direction at breakneck speed, and then heading at breakneck speed the other way. Becoming a Muslim I found that a lot of things you wanted suddenly fall into place...they're suddenly right there.

"For me it's now a lot easier, because although being a Muslim is sometimes very difficult, it's easy because there's nowhere else to go. It's very clear cut, the direction. It's very practical".

In another interview with NME, at the same time, he also gave an indication of how this had influenced the album:

"In a way, I hope there's less of us in the record, less self, less ego, because those other albums were made before we became Muslims, both of them, and there's a lot of ego-tripping and stuff on them...the kind of self-expression that most people use music for. In the new one there's less self-expression, and more of an allegory that means something less about oneself and more about the world".

# 1976



After the tour at the end of '75, Richard virtually disappeared from the public eye. It had been expected that he and Linda would be off the road until after their second baby had arrived, but in fact they didn't reappear until last month when they started rehearsing for the tour that they've just completed.

Apparently Richard retreated to a home in Norfolk, communicating with the outside world by means of an occasional visit or letter to the office of manager Jo Lustig. Meanwhile, rumours of marital disharmony and even doubts about the state of Richard's mental health began to circulate!

"I was doing very little musically, in fact nothing musically...I just wasn't particularly interested. I've been doing other things to fill in time, various other jobs...I've just been involved in other projects, really. I thought I'd never start again, actually, I thought I'd stopped. I didn't have any desire to carry on...I just wanted to do something else.

"One thing we had wanted to do was an album in Arabic, but I don't think we'll do that now, basically because we don't have the equipment. We're English people, and the people who listen to our music are from the West. We don't speak Arabic, but we can recite Arabic poetry so we could have done the vocals ourselves, and we were going to set it mostly to traditional music. It would have been quite interesting, if a little off-beat...it might have had a certain bizarre appeal. We'd thought of putting it out on the Help label and trying to distribute it all over the world...in Arab countries as well as

in America and Europe. But although in one way it would have been an interesting test, in another sense it wouldn't have been expressing ourselves to people who will listen".

In fact, during the whole of '76, Richard hardly played at all, either at home or in the studio, and the only recordings to come out of the year are two acoustic instrumental pieces recorded in the March and April, and released in June as part of the (guitar, vocal) anthology. 'Flee As A Bird', played on guitar, is a traditional tune with a ragtime flavour, while 'The Pitfall/The Excursion' was composed by Richard, and played by him on overdubbed guitars, dulcimer and mandolin. Both are pleasant enough, and interesting as evidence of Richard's continuing return to a preoccupation with acoustic music, but hardly stunning.

The first half of the double album comprises a selection of rare and unreleased material from Richard's earlier days, stretching from Emmitt Rhodes 'Time Will Show The Wiser' from the first Fairport album right through to a sparse, heart-rending version of 'The Dark End Of The Street', recorded at the Queen Elizabeth Hall concert in April '75.

As the title suggests, the album covers the development of Thompson the musician, rather than Thompson the songwriter, and it amply demonstrates his range, from the raw rock'n'roll of 'Time Will Show The Wiser' and the live version of 'Sweet Little Rock'n'Roller' and the rough'n'ready soloing on 'Mr. Lacey' (taken from a radio show), to the impeccably undulating rhythm work of 'Poor Will And The Jolly Hangman', the rich tremolo'd chords of 'A Heart Needs A Home', and the delicate acoustic picking on 'Dark End Of The Street'.

The real highlights are saved for the second record, however. Each side starts with one of the instrumentals mentioned above, but the rest of the record is given over to lengthy versions of 'Night Comes In' and 'Calvary Cross', both recorded at Oxford Poly during the last tour.

I was fortunate enough to be at the concert in question and remember it fondly as one of the most magical evenings I've ever spent at a concert, and these two tracks capture that perfectly. Taking two of Richard's strongest compositions as their basis, both pieces are extended into instrumental masterpieces, with Richard's Stratocaster and John Kirkpatrick's accordion weaving an ever-tautening pattern over Pegg and Mattacks' carefully constructed rhythm section.

Comparing Richard's playing on these two tracks with the earlier tunes on the album is like comparing the grace, imagination and breadth of vision of Johann Cruyff with the frenetic endeavours of kids in a park. If this is the work of a man so jaded that he was about to pack up music for good, then a Richard Thompson really in the mood would have to be positively dangerous.

## take a walk on the wild side...



with one of the innovators...  
Walk on the wild side-  
The best of Lou Reed  
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RCA

# 1977

Happily, for those who know and love his music, Richard did return...in March, with the announcement of a new, provisionally permanent band and the tour which has just been completed. He also went back to the studios, cutting some rough tracks on his own behalf, and making a cameo appearance on Sandy Denny's new album, playing what has been described to me as "steaming guitar" on her version of 'Candle In The Wind'.

"I got quite enthusiastic about music again, and I really enjoy playing with the people that I'm with now. We've got some interesting new material, so we're very keen to get on with it. Ideas just started to come again...interesting ideas for albums and things like that. I've had a few projects in my head for the last few months, and that's what brought us to this point, really".

At the time of writing I (along with even their closest advisors and friends) have yet to see the new band or hear their music, but from the way Richard described it, it sounds like it'll be quite a change.

"It's a fair bit different, more rhythmic in some senses...we've got into danceable, more physical music. We will be doing a few choice renditions of old material too, although

I'd rather do no old songs, because one changes, and a song really is a thing of a moment, and when that moment is gone, the song doesn't always have relevance beyond that time. But it's useful to keep reference points, both for oneself and for other people who show an interest in one's music. You don't cut people off dead".

Richard was a bit reluctant to talk too specifically about his new material, but it seems, in a way, to be an offshoot of his earlier idea for an album in Arabic. Rather than write his own lyrics, he has taken the words of other people, like the Persian poet Rumi, rearranged them, and set them to music.

"What we've tried to take from other people is some reflection on meaning in life, rather than the meaning being lost or covered up. And so we've gone to people who've expressed meaning, and taken that to put into the songs we sing. But we've expressed in the language we know.

"Music is something that can take you somewhere else, and that's what I would like to happen with our music. Sometimes music has a quality to it that lifts one, really elevates. For some people it's classical music, for others it's rock music, but it's something that moves you. I really want to play music that has that kind of quality to it. There will be plenty of stuff like 'Dimming Of The Day' as well, only

I hope of a higher quality...we'll just have things more refined and better".

Richard then talked about how he'd been listening to the radio a lot during the last year - for lack of a record player or tape machine - and how he'd been influenced by the Fun Thirty stuff he'd heard on it. An involuntary look of horror and suspicion must have crossed my face, because he then said:

"The music hasn't changed that much, though. I'm sure people will find it a natural progression. All we're doing is kicking out the bad stuff to try and make it better...surely people aren't satisfied with shoddy product. We'll still be doing older material so that there's some continuity to it, when it seems relevant to what we're doing now and what we want to express...there's so much in the old songs that I don't want to express. If you sing a song night after night it has an effect...you start living the song, and there are lots of my songs that I wouldn't want to live in".

Now that the tour is over, they should be going into the studio to prepare an album for release in the late summer, and no matter what direction the music pursues (and ignoring Richard's own hypercritical reaction to his previous albums), I'm sure it will be of the highest quality. Over the past ten years, Richard Thompson has led us to expect nothing less.

PAUL KENDALL







"The greatest rock'n'roll audience in the world"...Glasgow?...Detroit?...hell no, it's Lenny Kaye, rock critic, and guitarist with the Patti Smith Band.

# NEW YORK NUGGETS

In issue 68, Patti Smith talked about a number of things during an account of the first half of her visit to this country last year.

Part Two should have been an account of the other half, plus an interview with her guitarist Lenny Kaye, a legend in his own right. But as the visit took place last October it hardly seems topical to tell you about it like it was last week (which it was when I wrote the thing - not my fault it didn't go in before!).

So I've pruned it down to just the interview. Okay?

Right. After that introductory grumble it's scene-setting time. We're sitting in Lenny's room at the Portobello Hotel. Lenny talks while he gets ready for the evening's gig at Hammersmith Odeon.

My thanks to Lenny for donating his valuable time to talk...he hardly had time to unbutton the mutton on this trip, let alone give interviews.

*Are you happy with the new album?*

Yeah, we're very happy with 'Radio Ethiopia'. This time we didn't just go in and make a record. The week before we planned what kind of record we wanted to do. The first record we exactly like us. This album we had an idea of what we wanted to do. We were able to do it, plus it still sounds exactly like us. To me it's a great documentary record.

'Radio Ethiopia' (the track) was recorded totally live in the studio. There were no overdubs on it...nothing was done to it. It was very special the way it came about. It was really dark and there was a hurricane coming in around us, and we were in this studio in the middle of the night. We just did 'Radio Ethiopia' and it had this weird magic which we never recaptured, although we recorded it a few more times after that. We were gonna put other things over it, like radios, but we decided to just leave it how it came out. That track is what we've been working up to for a year.

Onstage 'Radio Ethiopia' is still fresh enough to use as a vehicle, and it also has less inbuilt barriers. We don't do 'Land' as heavily as we used to, because after a while you fall into patterns. That was actually a song onstage, whereas

'Radio Ethiopia' is nothing but a field. We call it a field, you know, a place where you can just run into it and have total freedom...an infinite field of exploration.

*What are your feelings about the way the British press react towards you? (Pretty viciously sometimes...see last episode's account of the rude-journalist-infested press conference)*

Listen, the English love controversy. I think one of the reasons the English press reacts very weirdly towards us is because we have some connection with the press, and I think it tends to make them more self-conscious about their role. I know in some ways it makes us more self-conscious. I mean, as a guitarist I think I've had to prove myself a lot more as a result of my involvement with rock journalism than any schlub of the street. With me it's a really stupid distinction. I mean, I was a guitarist before I was a writer. While I was a writer I was still a guitarist. I played in bands, I produced records, I sold records in Village Oldies. I collected and I was also a great fan, you know. To me, all those questions about "Is it different being up on the stage or in front of the stage?"...to me it's no difference, I go just as nuts. I'm probably one of the best rock

audiences in the world. Me and Patti are great audiences. The whole band is when we go to a place. We really like to make a lot of noise and throw energy at the performers. That's what you're there for.

We love the kids in England, because they really have probably more heart and more intuitive understanding of rock'n'roll than any audience in the world. I mean, audiences in Europe are great, but here we haven't got a language barrier to deal with, so we can really get going with an audience. I hope next time we come here we can do a big tour, because I've never seen much of England. I've hardly seen outside of London. It's like going to America and just going to New York.

*How is New York at the moment?*

It's great. There's lots of energy there.

*Are there still lots of new bands springing up?*

Yep! Everyone's been waiting for it to die away, but what's happened is it's gotten to be a real scene. Bands are getting signed and there's a lot of them and there's a lot of audience going to see them.

For a while it was just CBGBs and seven bands. Those seven bands were great: Television, The Ramones, Talking Heads, The Shirts, us, The Heartbreakers, Mink de Ville...it was almost like a little tempest in a teapot. There was all this incredible creativity going on, but it really hadn't caught, you know, but now there's a big audience for it, and all the bands are playing a lot.

The bands are all interesting...they're all doing different stuff. The scene isn't like one type of band. Tome Verlaine once said that all the bands in New York are like an idea, and it's true. You listen to that 'Live At CBGBs' album...there's such a weird spectrum of music that's covered. I really love it, you know. To me it's the most exciting thing, 'cos I love local bands. I helped with that mag in America called 'Rock Scene' which deals very personally with local bands. There's a section called 'New Bands' where we just have bands send in a picture. What's a greater morale booster for a band than to see their picture in a rock magazine? I love local bands, I love their impulse to rock'n'roll.

You've got a good band scene here. I've just been reading that mag 'Sniffin' Glue'. I've been reading about The Clash. I saw The Sex Pistols last time I was here. I love those bands, they just completely drive me crazy...such determination. They're like total energy.

*You're into reggae too, right?*

Yeah, me and Patti love reggae. We listen to it a lot. It's spaced-out music. It's music that attempts to create a consciousness. It attempts

to put you into space and keep you there. The rhythms are so weird, if you listen on and on and on to those reggae rhythms, it's like joujouka music, you get put in a trance.

*Can I ask you about Nuggets? (Lenny's legendary compilation of US 60s psychedelic and punk classics)*

Sure...to me it's a very amazing story. 'Nuggets' has really lived a whole life of its own. There might actually get to be a second volume. Everywhere I go people come up to me and say "When's the next 'Nuggets' coming out?"

Dave Van Ronk used to have this story where he would wake up in bed with some girl he'd been with the night before, and she'd say "Would you please sing 'Cocaine Blues' for me?". I can just fancy I'll wake up one morning and some girl will say "When is the next 'Nuggets' coming out?". Now I can actually say "When they get it together?"

Here's what happened...Sire Records in America (Phonogram over here) bought the American rights to 'Nuggets', and reissued the first volume with a new cover. They also wanna do a second volume.

I gave them the list Elektra had and didn't do anything with. Elektra wanted to do a second volume. They picked up an option for it very quickly and signed a complete idiot to go and get the legal matters taken care of.

The reason why the first one worked was because they had a great guy to do the legal work. You have to trace the owners of these tracks to so many different sources. Songs have been sold fifteen times through...who owns them is anybody's guess. The persons who own them all wanna make a million dollars out of their inclusion in a prestige anthology. They figure this is their chance to make the killing that never happened in the first place.

You have to deal with complete lunatics, and you gotta have a good lawyer. If you can't get the tracks you need then you can't have an LP, because there is not a lot of this stuff. I don't wanna put out garbage music on it. I don't wanna put records on it that just have a Farfisa organ tinkling on it and say "That's punk rock". I wanna put out records that people are going to get into.

'Nuggets One' was a great listening album...one and a half hours of a radio station programming great hits. To me it was a great thing it actually happened, because I never believed it was going to happen. I was so snotty with Elektra all through it, just trying to make it great.

For the second one, anybody who's into that kind of music can guess what the tracks are. If we don't get 'em there's no album. If we don't get '96 Tears' there's no album. If we don't get 'Talk Talk' by the Music Machine there's no album. 'I See The Light' by The Five Americans, 'A Question Of Temperature' by The Ballroom Farm, 'Time Won't Let Me' by The





Outsiders, 'Woolly Bully', 'Little Girl' by The Syndicate Of Sound... there are about thirty tracks, you know, obvious stuff.

I think the tracks on the first Nuggets were really like middle level. They weren't big hits and they weren't total obscurities, except in some cases. It was MOR punk. Having emphasised that, what's left in a lot of cases is the weird, obscure records, and the hittier records, which again is a balance which brings it into the middle. So a lot of records that I wouldn't have put on the first one I'm trying to get onto the second one, because it tells the other half of the story. There's a great record called 'Spazz' by The Elastic Band, which was released over here. There'll be some surprises on it, they're working on getting the rights now. Whether they will is anybody's guess. They say that by next May it might be together. I think that's a little early myself...next September at the earliest.

I'd like it to come out next fall, because that would be five years since the first one. To me, to have something actually live and last that long is incredible. It never sold a whole lot of copies to begin with.

Elektra really did well by me, and I think Sire will too. It's not something that takes up all my time thinking about because I play in this band. This is the present to me. I have a book coming out called 'Rock One Hundred', which I wrote with David Dalton, who wrote the James Dean biography. Ordinarily that would be one of the most exciting things in anyone's life. It's a great book...it's like the hundred greatest rock stars of all time, history through biography, and it really covers everybody.

Just then keyboard player Andy Paley walks in. He used to be in The Side-winders, and was planning to return to work with his brother Jonathan in their own band, The Paley Brothers.

After the interview, Lenny went on to whip out another corker at the Odeon with Patti, who excelled herself. And after Lenny's affirmation of his taste for reggae that afternoon, he and the band were obviously bowled over when they were joined onstage by talkover king Tapper Zukie, who provoked an audience reaction befitting the new Messiah.

Patti got so carried away she was in tears by the chaotic end, and to crown it all she smashed a newly acquired guitar ("a symbol").

Later, Patti and Lenny, despite being knackered, popped along to the ICA to see The Clash...and they made more noise than anyone, Patti even being moved to leap onstage for one number.

It was great to see supposed super-stars come and rave over a group they'd heard of just days before - especially after killing themselves on their own stage. But that's Patti and Lenny all over - fans!

KRIS NEEDS

## DAVID COVERDALE *White Snake*



The voice of Deep Purple  
**DAVID  
COVERDALE**  
first solo album  
**WHITESNAKE**



## DEAR JOHN



A letter arrived for Peel the other day which supposedly came from Rat Scabies' mother! It was an invitation to some sort of wing ding to welcome Rat and The Damned (referred to as Chris and his friends) back from some tour of somewhere. A phone call confirmed that this was indeed Mrs.Scabies, but the odd thing was that despite the fact that everyone knows that punks are dragged up in soul-destroying tower blocks and chaotic slum comprehensives until they are old enough to get social security together to put a deposit down on an instrument and start expressing their rejection of the established order, the lady seemed rather middle class, perfectly articulate, and apparently lived in a rather desirable area.

I expect it was just a front. I must say that some of the older generation of cockneys do have a sort of defiant pride which comes, I suppose, from having survived unemployment, the blitz, dock strikes and so on, and yet having retained a sense of propriety, respectability and the proper order of things...so unlike the younger generation.

Anyway, this was followed by another letter from Mrs.Vanian, Dave's mother! Now it seems to me that things are getting a bit silly. As Brian James is obviously an assumed name adopted to disguise his real identity I don't expect we'll hear from his mum...she probably doesn't even know he's in a band, I expect that when they get a gig he tells her he's off to night school. Even

so, I fully expect to find the following on my desk on Monday. Dear All,

I hope you don't think as how I'm 'pushy' by dropping you a 'note' to say thanks for all the help you have given Nigel and his friends in the field of finding a successful career.

Neither me or Mr.Sensible have ever written to the BBC before, except when I asked Pete Murray for Moira Anderson, and then I must have been out when it was on.

We never usually have Radio One on in the house, so I don't know where Nigel gets his 'ideas' from - in fact we were really surprised when he said "Mum, I'm in a group", as he never listens to Radio One either. We thought it must be another fad, like his stamps.

Then when he said could he bring Rat home for tea, his Dad put his foot down, as he said he'd be the one who'd finish up feeding it and cleaning it out. He didn't know as it was a 'person', you see. Actually, he has finished up feeding him most of the time as Rat never seems to get fed proper round at the Scabies'. And her with her airs and graces. Doing yoga off the telly now, they tell me. I'd laugh if she got 'stuck'. I knew her when she was just plain Rita Tesco and no better than she should be. Nobody was good enough then - every Saturday night in the Orchid Purley like Lady Muck - then all of a sudden it was round the registry with Les Scabies, and young Rat pops up, in a manner of speaking.

Still, least said soonest mended, and it looks as if the boys will settle down to something steady now, what with being on the telly that time and everything. Mr.Sensible wasn't too 'pleased' when they called the group 'The D---d', as he has never approved of language, but I know he was secretly pleased when Nigel decided to call himself Captain Sensible, as he had always hoped that Nigel would follow him into uniform, and although he never got above Fire Officer Sensible before he fell off the appliance in Catford and had to give up the 'Fire Service' with his bad back, he always hoped Nigel would take to it and called him his little captain when he was a baby.

He never says much, but I could tell he was appreciative as he blew his nose a lot while we were watching the Remembrance Service on Poppy Day. And as I said, with all that leather and zips and things that they all wear, it is a sort of uniform.

Course it's meant a lot of new friends coming to the house - that Johnny Rotten, for instance. Now I didn't see him on telly as it was 'bingo' night, but I did read the Sun and I expect there was something on both sides. Anyway, between you and me that Mr.Grundy looks as if he drinks. And I don't mean just having a couple at Xmas if you follow me.

Obviously it's not very convenient having to hide the pin cushion when John comes round, but you can't help wanting to mother him, him with his little white face looking all pinched. I tried to give him some of that Campbell's Cupasoup or the breakfast cereal that makes the little boy glow on the adverts, but he just picks at everything, and when I tell him that in the war we said leaving food was feeding Hitler he just smiles and leaves even more.

To be quite honest I find him a bit creepy just sitting there staring, but at least that Sidney Vicious offers to wash up. He breaks a lot of glasses, but it's the thought that counts and Nigel says that as soon as the money for the record comes I can 'get on' to the Tupperware lady and get whatever I want.

I was a bit worried when they came round with Wayne County who seems a very nice girl and very affectionate to the boys, but I think Nigel's too young to be 'serious', and I wouldn't like him to go and live in America as you only have to look at Kojak to see what it's like. All noise and violence.

Still, enough of my problems, must close now to catch the post. Thank everybody on the wireless who has helped Nigel's little band, and if you could I would like Moira Anderson. Singing something Scottish if you can find it.

Thanking you and oblige.

Greta

Greta Sensible (Mrs.)



## REVIEWS

### Islands

#### The Band

Capitol E-ST 11602

Ever since I first heard the magnificent 'Acadian Driftwood' and marvelled in particular at Garth Hudson's tasteful use of synthesiser, it has always been a mystery to me why The Band's last album, 'Northern Lights, Southern Cross', wasn't universally hailed as an all-time classic.

I reckon it vies pretty closely with their second one as being the best Band album of them all, and if you missed it or were dissuaded from listening to it by some bird-brained 'critic', then you are well and truly advised to make amends.

Meanwhile, the boys from Woodstock, who you may remember ceased operations earlier in the year - and held a million dollar bash in San Francisco to convince everybody of the fact - have gone and made another album! A good job too, because while almost every other 'established' band in America has become hopelessly erratic, or splintered off into and thousand and one nebulous side-trips, The Band remain constant, as re-assuring an outfit as there's ever been in rock music.

I can't for one minute believe that there are any of you out there who are not 100% convinced of the outstanding contribution The Band have made to contemporary American music, so I will not waste my limited supply of superlatives on preaching to the converted. I will employ then instead to transmit the pleasure I've gained from repeatedly listening to this new album.

At first I must admit that I was disappointed with it, and Richard Williams' unfavourable review in MM seemed less of a hatchet job than it does now. However, I continued to play it day and night, and sure enough, its intricacies, subtle melodies and lyrical strength



began to permeate my bleary senses.

It's true it hasn't got an epic on the scale of 'Acadian Driftwood', or a ballad with the power and beauty of 'It Makes No Difference' (we can really only expect to hear a handful of songs like that every year), but 'Islands' does have many outstanding moments. Robbie Robertson, as usual, dominates the songwriting credits, and of the eight cuts which he wrote or co-wrote, 'Right As Rain' (also the new single), 'Let The Night Fall', a superb song called 'Christmas Must Be Tonight', and the somewhat ethereal instrumental title track are all well up to accepted Band standards, while the other songs, substantial though they are, do not (for my ears) distinguish themselves individually yet.

Two standards, 'Georgia On My Mind' and 'Ain't That A Lot Of Love', complete the album, and are treated with the same degree of sensitivity and enthusiastic reappraisal that made their 'oldies' album, 'Moondog Matinee', such a success.

The quality of the arrangements, musicianship and production are, naturally, faultless; and if there is much less evidence of Robbie Robertson's precise and imaginative playing than I would have liked, the splendidly authoritative work of Garth Hudson and Rich-

ard Manuel, in particular, compensate to some extent.

Although (God help me) I can't for the life of me find ANY of my Band albums except the last one, I've never yet heard a record of theirs that I didn't like a great deal, and the same goes for this one. I've already spent more time listening to it than all but three or four other albums released this year, and its several memorable passages stand up to the most exacting comparisons.

Even if they carry out their intention of staying off the road, I sincerely hope they keep making records for a very long time, especially if they are as good as this.

ANDY CHILDS

### Thunderbyrd

#### Roger McGuinn

CBS 81883

It has to be admitted that my first impressions of this album were not favourable ones. Far from it, in fact. Although doubtlessly clever, the front cover struck me as fairly uninspiring, and the music within - with one immediately noticeable exception, 'American Girl' by Tom Petty - generally seemed to be uneventful. Is McGuinn a write-off, I began to ask myself? Has he jingle-jangled his last? A few days into the album, and I had the answer... a resounding NO!

It took a while to sort out the varying musical styles that McGuinn presented on 'Cardiff Rose', and in the face of apparently universal acceptance of the album, I decided that although individually I liked a good number of the cuts (and some were damn fine ones, make no mistake), the album overall lacked some cohesion.

Now whether this was due to a lack of musical compatibility or the inconsistency of the vocal performances, I'm still not sure, but whatever it was, the problem (if you could call it that) has been ironed out on 'Thunderbyrd'. What we have here is an album

that drives itself around the turntable by the sheer exuberance of the music.

For the most part it's hard, driving boogie (a word which even now I'm a little uneasy about, but it conveys more or less the direction that McGuinn seems to have adopted, aided and abetted by his newly assembled musical chums: namely Charlie Harrison on bass, Greg Thomas on drums and guitarist Rick Vito.

'All Night Long' (by Peter Frampton, no less) gets the album off to a start. I was horrified when I first learned of McGuinn cutting such a thing but (surprise, surprise) it comes across as a strong number, and is a fitting opener by virtue of the fact that it gives the listener a good idea of what's coming up.

I'm not too familiar with young Peter's work (to say the least), so I can't judge whether this could be regarded as a "typical Frampton song" (if there is such a thing), but the actual lyrics of the song don't stand up to too much critical inspection.

However, neither for that matter do any of the four McGuinn/Levy compositions that find their way onto this plat-



ter. Over the years their partnership has been responsible for some great, near-legendary songs: 'Just A Season', 'Chestnut Mare', 'Lover Of The Bayou' - but here their joint efforts seem to be a sad drop in standards, both musically and lyrically. Which is surprising when one considers the quality of the songs that the Levy/Dylan alliance brought about on the 'Desire' album.

Now although they're by no means great songs, 'It's Gone', 'Dixie Highway' and 'I'm Not Lonely Anymore' all fit in well with the general tone of the album and the sound that McGuinn is striving for, but 'Russian Hill' is completely out of place. It's a dark, slow song which rambles on in a haunting, surrealistic fashion, and in doing so creates a mood totally in opposition to the up-tempo feel of the rest of the album. Maybe the line about "bitter mesaline" gives a clue to the song's

lyrical complexities.

So what do we have left? Well, for a start the obligatory Dylan song, 'Golden Loom', is hardly a masterpiece, but nevertheless as it's not treated with any degree of seriousness, it comes off quite well as a result. 'Why Baby Why' is an excellent, rousing foot-stomper and one of the album's best cuts. So too is 'We Can Do It All Over Again', which succeeds because of, and not despite, its simple hook line which is repeated over and over at the end of the song.

But without a shadow of a doubt THE song on the album is Tom Petty's 'American Girl', on which McGuinn just shines. The song is tailor-made for his vocal style, and Tom Scott's well-aimed sax solo sets it off a treat...just goes to show that an old hand at the game can still teach those safety-pinned whippersnappers a thing or two.

So there you have it. Pulling it apart track-by-track isn't really fair, because it masks the fact that when taken as a whole, the album does have a lot going for it, and Don De Vito's production has retained a rawness throughout which contributes a lot to making the whole thing get off the ground.

Viewing them simply as a back-up unit for McGuinn, I can't see from this album where Thunderbyrd beat the Roger McGuinn Band out of the saddle, but perhaps it will be made obvious on the tour.

This album won't be enthused over by everyone, I'm sure, but it's a pretty good effort on McGuinn's part to try something new, and for that alone you should give it a fair listen before casting judgement upon it.

BARRY BALLARD

### The Wheel

#### Asleep

#### At The Wheel

Capitol E-ST 11620

This isn't going to be a very long review, because I want to play the record again before the pubs open. My own feelings about this band have been expressed quite recently in this publication, and after hearing this new album, talking to lead guitarist and vocalist Ray Benson, and hearing them perform most engagingly in London a few weeks back, I can only say that those feelings have been strengthened quite considerably, although one towering anomaly has arisen. Ray Benson is not 6'10" tall, merely 6'6", but he's still a prime candidate for the person I'd least like to have an argument with.

Happily, when I spoke to him

he was thoroughly charming, even though the cultural chasm that exist between Austin, Texas and Harrow, Middlesex prevented me from communicating with him on anything more than a purely musical level.

When I saw them play, it was at Hammersmith Odeon which, Ray told me, is usually the sort of place that they don't like to use if they can help it. Apparently they spend most of their time in America playing large clubs, where everybody can drink interminably, move about to their hearts content, and generally whoop it up... thereby creating exactly the right atmosphere for Western Swing to work to its full potential. At Hammersmith, although I insist they played incredibly well, there was a lack of intimacy and looseness which prevented the evening from really taking off, and while I went home satisfied, I'd have given my Eagles tickets to see them in a pub. (Ed...He made this statement before he'd seen The Eagles.)

Instead I played their new album again...and again...and again. I played it in the morning when a ferocious Katzenjammer threatened to curtail the day's activities, and I played it in the morning when Young and Co.'s potent brews began to take effect. Providing you are familiar, as you should be, with their earlier work, you will hear pretty much what you'd expect to, although every track this time is an original composition. Leroy Preston, more than anyone, has emerged as an extremely talent-



ed songwriter. His 'My Baby Thinks She's A Train', for instance, is one of the most authentic and witty pieces of rockabilly that I've heard in ages, and should (I suggest) be a single.

Of course, if you're a fan you'll obviously want this record, and if you're not then there's probably no way that blurb like this is going to convert you. But let me urge you to LISTEN. Listen hard and listen well, and the pleasure will be all yours.

ANDY CHILDS

### I'm Stranded

#### The Saints

EMI EMC 2570

Hey! This is a nice surprise! Almost out of nowhere comes this rip-snorter of an album when all we'd had from The Saints before was their killer single of last year, 'I'm Stranded'.

The 'Stranded' single was a limited edition cry for help by four Aussies (Chris Bailey - vocals; Ed Kuepper - guitar; Kym Bradshaw - bass; Ivor Hays - drums.), who felt like they were banging their heads against a brick wall trying to play high energy rock in their home country before *Sounds* and Jonh Ingham made it single of the week for several months.

The enthusiasm and subsequent demand resulted in a UK release on Power Exchange, and it sold well.

A few copies of this album filtered into this country after it came out on Australian EMI. Mr. Ingham went bonkers again. Panic gripped energy-starved, Pink Floyd-assaulted rock'n'roll maniacs as copies were scarce...but only for a few days, 'cos EMI here shoved it out in double quick time. (What's up chaps? Were all the directors conked out in the House of Lords at the time?).

This is one hell of an album, although it's a bit patchy. The Saints are best when they're rampaging through the sound barrier like a thousand Con-cordes on heat. When they decide to slow it down and draw

'Demolition Girl' is short and OK, but just as it screeches to a halt, we're off on the dirtiest, nastiest, salivating riff of the lot - 'Nights In Venice' careers on for nearly six minutes like an express train out of control on hot rails to hell. It's like the band is changing gear - up... Up...UP! until you think the engine and your head are gonna overheat and burst. Faster, faster, then SLAM...back into THAT riff.

Yeah, nice surprise, this album. Someone hire a plane and rescue the Saints.

KRIS NEEDS

### IV Rattus Norvegicus

#### The Stranglers

United Artists UAG 30045

Here come the Stranglers with forty minutes of brain-rapingly original spewings like you ain't gonna hear anywhere else.

They've come a long way since I first saw them supporting Patti Smith a year ago. All that untamed potential has been refined and channelled into yet another of the year's great debut albums...and what a great year for debut albums!

Melody Maker's Mike Oldfart says the Stranglers have got nothing to offer...he must have the hearing capacity of a cat's willy. The Stranglers also sometimes come in for a bit of stick from the other new groups who say they're not new, etc. I don't know about that and I don't care...neither should you.

The Stranglers make vibrant, inventive music which I like a lot (and so do a lot of other people, judging by the numbers turned away from their recent Roundhouse gig). What I'm trying to say is, don't listen to anything or anyone except your own ears (and the Stranglers' album).

It's hard to describe this erent, and some of the melodies tear the top off my head and light the blue touch paper on my brain cells. I've heard that about The Stranglers sounding like The Doors, The Velvet, etc., and there's no disputing the influences, and Dave Greenfield's magic organ is prone to soar off into regions only previously charted by Manzarek.

Take 'Princess Of The Streets', for example, which perfectly evokes The Doors' desolate, sleazy romanticism. The Doors are cited because I suppose they're the nearest thing, but it's still The Stranglers all round. THE STRANGLERS!

There are some sinister influences at work here. Psychedelic embroidery, like on 'Ugly', which takes a menacing spiral riff and some NAAASTY vocals all about being UGLY. Look...The Stranglers may have consumed these influences, but







when they're spewed out, it's the contents of The Stranglers own unique stomach that comes out.

This album is a sinister, scary ride through unknown dark sewers, culminating in the climactic 'Down In The Sewer' itself, my favourite track. It epitomises the sound of The Stranglers...Jean Jacques Burnel's piercing, grating bass clanking about over Jett Black's GBH drumming, while Dave Greenfield soars and sears. Meanwhile Hugh Cornwell hacks rusty chords or squeezes out highly melodic solos from his guitar, which I'm sure has the power to pop spots at fifty paces.

While the group cruise on their creepo riffs as effortlessly as a turd on course for the sewage plant, Hugh or Jean Jacques belt out the words, which are incisive, rasping comments on the sorry

state of the human being or psychedelic horror-slanted stories.

At the moment I like the opener, 'Sometimes', with its propulsive catchiness; 'Hangin' Around' and its stunning guitar solo; 'Goodbye Toulouse', whose vocals remind me of 'West Side Story' at 100mph; and 'Peaches' the sleazy tale of a beach voyeur.

Both sides of the single are here too - '(Get A) Grip (On Yourself)', which is fuckin' murder to type, and 'London Lady'.

The first 10,000 copies had a free single - a live version of Dave Greenfield's rancid 'Peasant In The Big Shitty', and 'Choosy Susie', which is OK. I would have liked to have seen Hugh Cornwell's masto-stage-spew classic 'School-ma'am' somewhere in this package, but never mind. This'll do.

KRIS NEEDS

## Tobler's Own

In a probably futile attempt to salve my conscience as far as reviews go, this is a short series of reviews of artists/ideas I generally like. One or two long reviews don't seem to do the job, so here's a bit of quart-in-pint-potting.

Eyes

### Tony Joe White

(20th Century)

About time too. The last original LP by TJW came out in 1973, on which he seemed to have merged every track together to produce a well-played

album which ultimately amounted to immaculate tedium. I was very pleased a couple of years ago to compile a retrospective from Tony Joe's first three (abd best) albums, but since then I suspect that most will have forgotten him...a shame, but not a surprise. Now he's back with a new generation to sing to, who may not recall whopper stomper guitar, swamp rock, and all the rest, and who might easily find the deep sleepy voice attractive, as it surely is. What's odd is that in the four year interim, Tony Joe seems to have learned how to sing like his namesake Barry of all people. Although I find Barry White about as appealing

a proposition as spending the night with an incontinent elephant (no comparisons intended) Tony Joe (strangely enough also on the same label as Barry) makes a pretty good sound with these mellow songs. His only problem is that of having failed, as far as my fallible ears can tell, to find a hit single among his ten self compositions here.

If you're an old-style fan there are several examples of the old style on side two, like 'Texas Woman', which is twelve bar simplicity as opposed to instrumental sheen, but it also sounds dated and predictable...precisely why he hasn't made a record in four years. Fortunately the final track, 'That Loving Feeling', reverts to the new direction and is probably the likeliest 45, although still a longshot, due to its Jane Birkin influence. It's nice to have him back, though.

### The Beach Boys Love You

## The Beach Boys

(Brother/Reprise)

In my humble opinion (and having just finished a book on the Beach Boys, I've been exposed to a lot of their music of late) this is the most evenly excellent album they've yet made, bar none. What Kent and Dado say is basically correct, except I think it's a rather better LP than Nick suggests. The return of Brian Wilson means a reversion to guileless and amusing lyrics

...the other cats just seemed to be trying too hard with their metaphysical overtones. Here you can understand most everything without straining, and while I don't agree with their choice of tracks completely, 'Johnny Carson', particularly the outro, is pure magic. And you should all be subscribing to the very interesting 'Pet Sounds' fanzine, available from David Leaf, 1546 S.Saltair Ave, West LA, California 90025. At five dollars per year it's a snip. It'll also be nice, of course, to see whether Brian's recovery is maintained with Caribou Records, but I reckon he's back with a bang...ace album.

Hit And Run

## Ian Matthews

(CBS)

Strangely close to the sound of Boz Scaggs (in the vocal department) and Van Morrison (in the instrumental virtuosity of Steve Hook's on various saxes, and Jay Lacy on guitar, who you'll remember as Nesmith's guitar player in the

Countryside Band...which is no doubt where he met Ian). The comparisons are by no means intended as hype, but the similarity, which does not indicate a lack of originality, just seems to be there. The songwriting team which dominates is that of Matthews and Lacy, and it's heartening to note so many originals, because on the last album the cover versions often didn't cut it.

Only three of the nine songs here are covers, and all are fairly obscure: 'The Frame' from Terry Reid's last LP; 'One Day With You' by John Martyn - both very nicely done with Lacy and Hooks shining respectively - and Richard Stekol's 'Help To Guide Me'. Recognise the name, Nes freaks? He's the dude who wrote 'Wax Minute' on 'Tantamount', and he was also a member of Honk, as was Tris Imboden, who's now Ian's drummer. (Stekol is now in The Funky Kings with Jack Tempchin - Ed.) Incestuous, eh? There's a remake of 'Tigers Will Survive' (oddly enough in the same Side Two Track One position that it originally was, but with some lyric changes and a vocal middle eight. What else can I tell you? From the abnormally large number of letters I received after the Matthews trilogy, I expect a lot of you will be getting this anyway, but it's as much recommended to the unconverted. A tour would be nice.

Four

## Billy Swan

(Monument)

This time out, Billy has forsaken his friends and drinking partners in Nashville, and plumped instead for the red hot Muscle Shoals sounds of Messrs.Hood, Hawkins, Beckett, Carr and Johnson, whose playing has few rivals. He's also forsaken his usual staple of oldies for the time being, although one or two of the songs, like 'Pardon Me' and 'Last Call' have over-the-shoulder glances in the direction of the 50s, and 'Smoky Places' sounds exactly like 'Boardwalk' era Drifters. Then there are a couple of simplistic, but rather moving love songs to Marlu (Mrs.Swan) in 'Not Everyone Knows' and 'California Song', plus the quirky 'Oliver Swan' and several others. But I reckon this is a very personal album altogether, which probably isn't capable of being as commercial as its predecessors...although that may not be the record company's intention. Even Planet Swan, Billy's daughter and his pride and joy, makes a brief appearance on baby noises during 'Me And My Honey'. It's difficult to give a reasoned opinion of this,

# ZIGZAG FAB THIRTY

Well, reaction to last month's new chart procedure has completely staggered us...there wasn't any. Something a little more controversial is obviously called for, and we all know what that means, so (taking time off from giving his new jacket another undercoat of Crown Plus Two) here he is...the man you love to hate, KRIS NEEDS.

1	THE CLASH	THE CLASH	CBS 82000 (The whole album!)
2	Chinese Rock	HEARTBREAKERS	Track Pre-release
3	Anarchy In The UK	SEX PISTOLS	EMI 2566
4	The Youth	BURNING SPEAR	Spear Pre-release
5	Mass Production	IGGY POP	RCA PL 12275
6	Nights In Venice	THE SAINTS	EMI EMC 2570
7	Suzy Is A Headbanger	THE RAMONES	Sire 9103 254
8	Life Is A Funny Thing	LEROY SMART	Attack 2858
9	Two Sevens Clash	CULTURE	Joe Gibbs
10	Sweetie Come From America	REVOLUTIONARIES	Carib Gems 006
11	In The City	THE JAM	Polydor Pre-release
12	Down In The Sewer	THE STRANGLERS	United Artists UAG 30045
13	Deliverance Will Come	DENNIS BROWN	Joe Gibbs
14	Sister Morphine	MARIANNE FAITHFULL	Decca 6454 027
15	Rescue Jah Children	JUNIOR MURVIN	Island ILPS 9499
16	Blood Money	PABLO MOSES	Sound Tracs 1002
17	Personality Crisis	NEW YORK DOLLS	Mercury 6338 270
18	Africa	RICO	Island ILPS 9485
19	Side Two Of 'Disco Dub'	JOHNNY CLARKE	Attack 2885 (Tracks not named)
20	Arthur Comics	STALK FORREST GROUP	Elektra EKM 45693
21	Breaking Glass	DAVID BOWIE	RCA PL 12030
22	Shake Some Action	FLAMIN GROOVIES	French Phonogram 6370 804
23	You Forget To Answer	NICO	Island ILPS 9311
24	Roadrunner	THE MODERN LOVERS	Home Of The Hits 1910
25	W-e-e-p-i-n-g	JUNIOR BYLES	Thing
26	Smile Jamaica	BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS	Tuff Gong
27	Friction	TELEVISION	Elektra 7E-1098
28	Rip Her To Shreds	BLONDIE	Private Stock 203 2023
29	New Rose	THE DAMNED	Stiff Buy 6
30	Greedy Girl	JAH STITCH	Earthquake

but if Billy's having a bad patch in his private life (and it sounds as if he is) then I hope it ends soon. Still...only such an open human being as Billy could aspire to such a record.

### I'm All Wrapped Up In You

## Don Gibson

(DJM)

Of all the comebacks I've witnessed in the last few years, the one by Don Gibson has to be the most impressive, perhaps nearly equalled by that of Spirit. From being a self-confessed junkie for most of the last ten years, he's back at the age of 49 with a brace of new albums which sound like killers to me. Of course, he wasn't done any favours by the absurd and rather unpleasant '4 Sides Of' double recently,

which was a repackaging of mundane crap, but I urge you to check out this album and 'Don't Stop Loving Me', also on DJM.

This is the antithesis of formulaised Nashville, and the lack of formula can be really astonishing when you're close enough - as I fortunately was in Paris a couple of years ago, when several of these backing people, like the brilliant Dale Sellers and the elderly Jordanaires played their legs off for three hours. Russ Hicks, the steel player with Barefoot Jerry, was there too, and on the three tracks where he, Sellers and ace harp player Terry McMillan are in the band, they'd run Emmylou's bunch close, and that's from a Hot Band fanatic. But Don Gibson is great...his voice and his phrasing are completely unique, and when he gets the right sort of song (which seems to be rather more often than not), he's breathtaking. If he can just get together a more even bunch of material,

he'll have a whole new career ahead of him before long. And his last one was pretty good. OK, I'm sure you're not at all convinced, so just check out the last track on this record, 'Bringin' In The Georgia Mail'. Right?...Whoohoo!

The Clash

## The Clash

(CBS)

I thought you'd like to know what a person nominated as the prime contender for a badge which Julie Burchill could wear (in response to Caroline Coon wearing a Julie Burchill badge) thinks about Needs' apparently fave band of the moment...It's all right. Highly energetic, cut at a higher volume than most other records, generally tuneless, with lyrics which are far too often difficult to hear. There's a

lack of instrumental virtuosity, often due to the fact that the songs are played so fast that the drummer has difficulty in keeping up, and a sameness which leads to (I'm sorry to say this) boredom after a while. If the words are so important - and I have been led to believe that they are - then why not enclose a lyric sheet, or work a lot harder on the vocal recording?

For me, music is pleasure, and while much of what can be heard of the Clash's "message" is undeniably important, surely the idea ought to be to draw the attention of people who can do something about it to that message. As it is, it's bloody hard to listen to this record, and if new wave kids are stupid enough to pay money which apparently they don't have to buy it, does that bring us any closer to solving their problem? (Don't quite follow the line of reason there, John - Ed.) It seems more likely to alienate than inform. And let me add that they're not the only ones who produce albums which are difficult to listen to. I made exactly the same criticism of Kris Kristofferson (there's a punk for you!) last year.

Blondie

## Blondie

(Private Stock)

On the other hand, this is pretty good, the big difference between this and the Clash being that this is listenable on more than one level. It does have some strange lyrics, but you have the choice of listening carefully or not, and if you don't, the general sound and production are good enough to make it quite a delight anyway. The Clash sing 'I'm So Bored With The USA'...they're entitled to their opinion, of course, but don't forget that Mick Jones used to be a mad Mott fan, according to Needs, and their early Dylan noodlings were certainly influenced by American music.

If The Clash had bothered to attempt the use of American technology as opposed to Westway ignorance, they might have come up with something as riveting as Blondie, or more to the point, the Television album, which finds me in complete agreement with Needs. If this is supposed to be New Wave music I'm right behind it, but I don't think it's any more New Wave than Keith Reid. Blondie and Television have made excellent records first time out, and from what I've heard, so have The Stranglers, but The Clash - as far as I'm concerned - have almost totally failed to communicate. Of course, they probably don't want to communicate with someone like me.

JOHN TOBLER



# OVER the GARDEN WALL

My God! Has the world gone mad?? Frame and myself have just returned from a month of idling and idiocy in the sunny climes of California, using the hospitality of our good friend Sankey Phillips as an escape from the rigours of the last year...and what do we find? The new issue looking like a thinking man's *Sniffing Glue*, all sorts of palaver involving the *Sun* - which you've probably already heard about from the weeklies, and young Kendall already reduced to a gaunt, gibbering shadow of his former robust self. Tobler complaining bitterly about the quality of the April ish, Childs complaining about the quality of the bitter, and Needsy demanding satisfaction from United Artists after they'd bogusly credited his "force nine gale of bad breath" description of The Strangers to Chas de Whalley in all their ads.

Obviously a sane and stabilising influence is desperately needed if the old mag and its diverse staff are going to remain in one piece, but fear not...Mac is back, God is in his Heaven, and all will be well.

Actually, as an aid to Kendall in the assimilation of the many pressures and opinions brought to bear on him, I've decided to rerun the 'WHO WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN ZIGZAG' poll that we had last year...it'll be very interesting to see how the turmoil of the past twelve months have affected our readership and their feelings. Don't delay, write today, sending your ten nominations (and any other suggestions you may care to make) to my good self, c/o Yeoman Cottage, North Marston, Buckingham MK 18 3PH.

In other ways it was a good time to come back, though. After some four weeks of self-imposed exile from the pace and excitement of the music biz, both Frame and I hurled ourselves back into the fray with renewed gusto, and seem to have spent most of our time running to and from "town" (as we *cognoscenti* refer to London), doing interviews, attending concerts, and allowing ourselves to be entertained in the extravagant manner employed by the record companies to keep the media sweet.

The best of the concerts was undoubtedly The Eagles - somewhat to my surprise, as I've tended to file them under "hip easy listening" (to use Simon Frith's term) since Bernie Leadon left. Although they were playing in that dreadful barn, the Empire Pool, which is certainly more suited to show jumping and basketball (and where, in most seats, you have to sit with your head at 90° to the rest of your body, thus guaranteeing ghastly spasms of the neck muscles for some time afterwards), they were fabulous. The sound was great, the songs were great, and for most of the 100 minutes they were on, they played with an enthusiasm and commitment that would have been a real kick in the balls for the piss-taking Needs.

The next night I rolled along to the New Vic to witness Lou Reed attempting to give the kiss of life to his flagging reputation. I'm afraid he failed...if I have to see a performance as pathetically lacklustre, inept and insulting ever again, I shall feel extremely hard done by. Never have I heard so many great songs thrown away so carelessly in such a short space of time, never have I seen a performer in Reed's position with such a dull, unimaginative band, and never have I seen an artist (not even Frank Zappa) treat his audience with such undisguised disdain. As far as I remember, he made four utterances all night - "Shut the fuck up!", a sharp sentence in which the only distinguishable words were "tuning", "fuck" and "fucking", a brief announcement that they were going to play some material

from his forthcoming album, and "That's the last fucking word you'll get from me tonight"...this to people who'd all stumped up three quid or so for the privilege of seeing him...and they applauded!!

Some of Lou's slurred vocals, and his self-conscious movements, and the dire harmonies, and the ham-fisted renditions of once-classic songs were so absurd that I found myself bursting out laughing...in retrospect, I should probably have been crying.

On a happier note, Childs has asked me to inform you that despite the various references to his slothfully hedonistic lifestyle in the last issue, he has been working like a man possessed preparing yet another *Fat Angel*. He was going to tell me what will be in it, but he suddenly realised that his glass was empty and had to rush to the bar, uttering strange cries of desperation and anxiety.

On a less happy note, however, I seem to have lost my Fab Thirty chart during my brief absence from these shores...nothing's sacred these days, is it? First of all I get my Infallible Guide unceremoniously snatched away from me, and now I'm not even allowed to air my predilections in public via the Chart.

But nothing can gag me completely, not even snidey comments from the all-powerful NME (who had the gall, incidentally, to confuse me with Frame while denigrating my entirely accurate and perceptive review of The Damned's album in the March issue), and I'm here to tell you that in the couple of weeks since our return, we at Yeoman Cottage have been deriving especial pleasure from albums by Little Feat, Valerie Carter, Bonnie Raitt, James Talley and Dave Edmunds...which have made up in part for the severe disappointment experienced as a result of Van Morrison's recent endeavour.

As the fruits of well over two years labour, 'A Period Of Transition' really sounds a bit uninspired, and it's hard to believe that at least parts of the two albums that he apparently recorded and then scrapped aren't of a higher quality...and why he should have felt the need to go into partnership with Dr. John, whose creative achievements are molehills next to Van's mountain range is beyond me.

I've heard through the grapevine that Van cancelled the European dates which were scheduled for this month because, regardless of ecstatic critical reaction in the States, he was unhappy with his recent TV show over there, and didn't feel that he was in the right frame of mind to reach his peak in a live performance...so he pulled out rather than risk doing what he felt to be substandard shows.

Oh look, this is ridiculous, I can't continue this charade any longer...I'm not really Mac Garry at all, I'm your editor. The silly old bugger was supposed to be delivering a page's worth and then at the last minute he suddenly announces that he's dying of terminal syphilis or tonsillitis or some equally trumped-up story and can't do it! Which leaves me with about twenty minutes to tap out something suitable...

Mac has not been within 5000 miles of sunny California in the last month or so...the lazy old sod has just been snoozing up at Yeoman Cottage, occasionally allowing Frame or the delightful Carole to proffer him tantalising sweetmeats or enervating beverages. But I swear on my mint condition copy of the third Big Star album that I will have him working again by next month...even if I have to threaten to play him ELP's double album to do it.

## FAVOURITE SONGS FROM THE PEN OF BOB DYLAN

ZIGZAG READERS POLL - JANUARY 1977

- 1 LIKE A ROLLING STONE
- 2 DESOLATION ROW
- 3 TANGLED UP IN BLUE
- 4 A HARD RAIN'S GONNA
- 5 POSITIVELY 4TH ST FALL
- 6 ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER
- 7 LILY ROSEMARY & THE JACK
- 8 MR TAMBORINE MAN
- 9 STUCK INSIDE OF MOBILE
- 10 SHELTER FROM THE STORM
- 11 VISIONS OF JOANNA
- 12 LAY LADY LAY
- 13 SUBTERRANEAN H. BLUES
- 14 JUST LIKE TOM THUMB'S
- 15 SAD EYED LADY OF THE LOWLANDS
- 16 IT'S ALRIGHT MA, I'M ONLY
- 17 IDIOT WIND BLEEDIN'
- 18 KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S
- 19 BALLAD OF A THIN MAN
- 20 IF YOU SEE HER, SAY HELLO
- 21 HURRICANE
- 22 JUST LIKE A WOMAN
- 23 SARAH
- 24 MY BACK PAGES
- 25 BOOTS OF SPANISH LEATHER
- 26 GATES OF EDEN
- 27 IT'S ALL OVER NOW, BABY
- 28 TO RAMONA BLUE
- 29 CHIMES OF FREEDOM
- 30 MAGGIE'S FARM
- 31 SHE BELONGS TO ME
- 32 I WANT YOU
- 33 IT TAKES A LOT TO LAUGH
- 34 I SHALL BE RELEASED
- 35 THE TIMES THEY ARE A
- 36 SWEET MARIE CHANGIN
- 37 BLOWN IN THE WIND
- 38 SIGN IN THE WINDOW
- 39 RAINY DAY WOMEN #12.35
- 40 LAY DOWN YOUR WEARY
- 41 ISIS TUNE
- 42 WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE
- 43 YOU AINT GOIN NOWHERE
- 44 LOVE MINUS ZERO
- 45 TEMPORARY LIKE ACHILLES
- 46 FOURTH TIME AROUND
- 47 WATCHING THE RIVER FLOW
- 48 ONE OF US MUST KNOW
- 49 DON'T THINK TWICE
- 50 PLEASE CRAWL OUT YOUR
- 51 JOEY WINDOW
- 52 ALL I REALLY WANNA DO
- 53 BLACK DIAMOND BAY
- 54 SIMPLE TWIST OF FATE
- 55 ONLY A PAWN IN THEIR GAME
- 56 TEARS OF RAGE
- 57 MOZAMBIQUE
- 58 IT AINT ME, BABE
- 59 FRANKIE LEE & JUDAS
- 60 IF NOT FOR YOU PRIEST
- 61 WHEN I PAINT MY MASTER
- 62 ONE TOO MANY MORNINGS
- 63 ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS
- 64 NOTHING WAS DELIVERED
- 65 TOMBSTONE BLUES
- 66 115TH DREAM
- 67 TIME PASSES SLOWLY
- 68 JOHN WESLEY HARDIN
- 69 FROM A BUICK 6
- 70 GEORGE JACKSON
- 71 LONESOME DEATH OF HATTIE
- 72 PERCY'S SONG CARROLL
- 73 THIS WHEEL'S ON FIRE
- 74 YOU ANGEL YOU
- 75 NEW MORNING

Please excuse abbreviations, but he does tend to write songs with long titles.

ZIGZAG MAY 77

The Marshall Tucker Band  
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TOMMY CALDWELL  
Bass, Tambourine and Harmony Vocals  
DOUG GRAY  
Lead and Harmony Vocals  
GEORGE McCORKLE  
Electric, Twelve String and Acoustic Guitars  
JERRY EUBANKS  
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PAUL RIDDLE  
Drums

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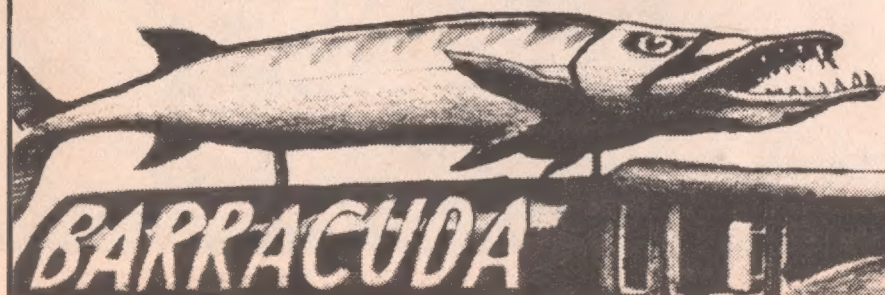
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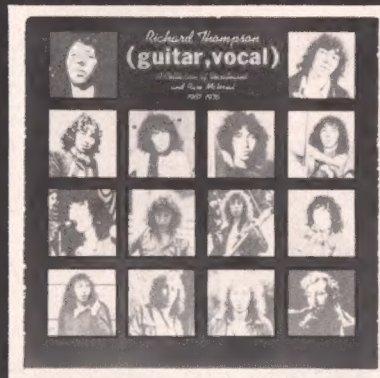
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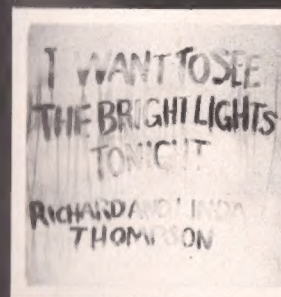
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